

Barquilla de la Santa Maria

BULLETIN of the Catholic Record Society -
Diocese of Columbus

Vol. XX, No. 9

Sept. 20: St. Thomas of Villanova

September, 1995



Rev. Thomas F. Delaney

The above photograph, which was handed down in the family of the editor, had no name attached to it until comparison with the photos in the Columbus St. Patrick Parish centennial booklet led to the conclusion that the subject is Rev. Thomas F. Delaney, who was a priest of this diocese for a few years in the 1880s. Father Delaney's story, pieced together from various sources, seems to be that of a "priest in search of good home." He did excellent work in Columbus during his sojourn here, especially at the Ohio Penitentiary, but upon being transferred to a new assignment in rural Eastern Ohio, opted for a return to city life in another diocese. He finally found his home in New Orleans. Thanks to the many archivists and others who supplied data, who are mentioned in the notes, the story of his life can now be told.

Thomas F. Delaney was born in Troy, New York, on October 12, 1839, the eldest child of Daniel and Mary Delaney. The parents took him to be baptized by Rev. John Shanahan at St. Peter's Church on October 22. Both parents were natives of Ireland and the father was a grocer.¹

Thomas "early manifested a vocation for the priesthood." However, he was not ordained until the age of thirty-three. No doubt this was due the the death of his father when Thomas was in his teens. He had to work to support his mother and his brother Daniel, who was three years his junior. In 1860 he was head of the household and was a laborer.²

He was educated for the priesthood in Canada and in Troy. He studied in St. Francis College in Troy and was graduated from the Troy Theological seminary. He was ordained in Brooklyn, N.Y., Feb. 22, 1873, by his cousin, Bishop Conroy of Albany.³

Later in life, Father Delaney in answering a questionnaire stated that Brooklyn was his "first diocese" and the diocesan archives there indicate that he served the diocese as a member of the Fathers of Mercy.⁴ Nothing further could be learned of his career until the year 1881. He was not listed in the annual Catholic directories. Intriguingly, however, a Father Thomas Delaney was serving in the Diocese of Kildare, Ireland, from 1873 to 1879. A letter of inquiry to that diocese, unfortunately, produced no response.

Portland, Maine

On August 30, 1881 Father Delaney was with the Dominican Fathers in Newark, New Jersey, where he had been living for two years. He wrote to Bishop James Augustine Healy of Portland, requesting admission to that diocese.⁵ That diocese has no record of his ever being admitted there, but the annual Catholic directory indicates that he was stationed at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Portland in 1882.

The Ohio Penitentiary

Official (Protestant) chaplains were appointed by Board of Directors of the Ohio Penitentiary and were paid \$83.33 per month. They conducted services on Sundays (and for the women prisoners beginning in 1881), which all Protestant prisoners were required to attend; their only other known duty was to examine mail sent to the convicts, and if the contents were found "not prejudicial to the discipline of the prison, or the morals of the convicts" to deliver it to the convicts. John Burns served as chaplain from 1878 until May of 1880, when he was succeeded by Rev. D. R. Miller. Miller resigned at the end of 1881 and was replaced by I. H. deBruin. deBruin remained until a change of administration in April, 1884, when Rev. R. D. Wolf of the "Christian Union denomination" took his place. Wolf had been serving a circuit in Highland and Athens counties, Ohio.⁶

One must wonder about the qualifications of these chaplains, not as sincere men but as theologians or ministers. After his service as chaplain, D. R. Miller became Superintendent of the Girls' Industrial Home. Prior to being chaplain, Israel H. deBruin had been Clerk at the Penitentiary and after leaving the post was an insurance agent.⁷

The names of only three Catholic chaplains to the Penitentiary prior to Father Delaney are known. Bishop Hartley in his *History of Fifty Years* wrote, "As long ago as the days when Rt. Rev. Bishop Fitzgerald was pastor of St. Patrick's Church the Catholic priest has looked after the spiritual wants of the prisoners at the Ohio Penitentiary." Father Fitzgerald's era covered the years from 1857 to 1867. Hartley also said, "For many years Father Ahrens when professor at St. Aloysius Seminary said Mass for them every Sunday. Afterwards the priests from the cathedral attended the institution."⁸ Father Ahrens was procurator at the seminary during its entire existence, from 1871 to 1876. The third

known Catholic chaplain was Father Dennis A. Clarke, who, while stationed at the Cathedral, was chaplain in the years 1879 to 1883.⁹

In 1875 a small, 40-foot square building was erected as a place of worship and was used by both these Catholics and the Protestant chaplains.¹⁰

Delaney as Chaplain of the Penitentiary

In 1883 Father Dennis Clarke, having resigned his posts in Columbus, went to Colorado and Utah "to renew his health."¹¹ The photograph of Father Delaney, coincidentally, was taken by Bates & Nye, Corner of Larimer and Fifteenth, Denver, Colorado. It may be that the two priests met by chance in Colorado and Father Clarke encouraged Delaney to apply to Bishop Watterson. How else could he have chosen Columbus? Delaney seems to have arrived in Columbus early in 1884. The Cathedral sacramental registers list none administered by Delaney. He must have only resided there while devoting full-time to the Penitentiary, and he immediately made his presence felt. Newspaper notices chronicled his efforts, even though he was not named in the first of them, in the *Columbian* of May 24, which speaks for itself:

The time allowed for Catholic services at the Penitentiary being found entirely too limited for the wants of the prisoners an effort was recently made to have it more extended and with eminent success. Two hours and a half are now permitted every Sunday, and with the week-day facilities, will prove amply sufficient for the energetic chaplain in charge to do a great good to the unfortunates who are under his pastoral care. We are glad to note that this concession was brought about by outside influence. Mr. S. K. Donavin, Managing Editor of the Times, piloted the undertaking and brought it to a successful issue. We question if any prominent Catholic would have been persuaded to start the movement, and the credit of the work is therefore enhanced by the fact that disinterested parties brought it about. [The Democratic newspaper the *Daily Times* was published in Columbus from 1880 to 1888.]

On June 4, 1884 the Penitentiary Board of Directors instructed the warden to excuse all prisoners from attending the regular religious services in the chapel, who from choice regularly attend the Catholic exercises then being held at the institution.¹² By June 14, the board had set apart a spacious room "for the exclusive use of Catholic worship." It was formally opened on Sunday, June 29, 1884. "High Mass was sung by the chaplain, Father Delaney, at which all the Catholic prisoners assisted. Many outsiders were also present. The singing for the occasion, which is said to have been very fine, was rendered by a volunteer choir of the most capable singers in the city."¹³ This was a great blessing to the prisoners. "An 1884 publication noted, 'Sunday in prison is the longest of all days to the prisoner as he is locked in his cell from 1 o'clock p.m. until Monday morning.' That year, some 150 attended a 7:30 a.m. Mass..."¹⁴

Father Delaney's next effort was a library for the Catholic prisoners, which he established in the chapel "through kindness of Warden Petrey and the gentlemen of the Board of Managers." Through the pages of the *Catholic Columbian* he solicited books and magazines for it, to be mailed to him at his residence, which by then was at St. Patrick Church.¹⁵

Father Delaney's inspiring work with the prisoners, for which the State paid nothing, must be credited with the following resolution of the Penitentiary Board of Directors, which was adopted on November 6, 1884: "That the office of Chaplain be abolished from and after the 30th of November 1884 and that the Secretary be authorised to secure the services of Ministers of the City of different denominations to conduct religious services, arranging for a proper rotation in such services. And that the clerical work heretofore charged on the Chaplain devolve on the Librarian." The *Columbian* remarked that "This will enable the Catholic Chaplain to purchase sole leather, at least. This, the writer knows from long experience could not have been

done, heretofore. Good for the Board of Managers."¹⁶

The effort continued. By August of 1885, there was an "Ohio Penitentiary Catholic Choir" which, assisted by Miss Josephine Naughton, organist, rendered Stochlin's Mass in B Flat at Solemn High Mass offered by Father Delaney.¹⁷

About September of 1885, Father Delaney's removal to Toronto, Ohio was announced. The *Columbian* noted the tribute paid to him by those under his care at the Penitentiary:

On last Tuesday evening a committee of the Catholic Guards at the Ohio Penitentiary called on Rev. Father Delaney and requested his immediate presence at the office of the Warden. Without understanding the cause of the hasty summons Father Delaney accompanied the gentlemen. Arrived at the prison Father Delaney was ushered into the presence of Warden Peetry[?], about whom had gathered his family, the prison guards and a number of the Catholic prisoners. Before Father Delaney could recover his astonishment at the unusual gathering, Dr. J. V. Kilfoyne, one of the prisoners, made an address and at the same time the presentation of a beautiful tea service of solid silver containing the following inscription: 'Presented to Rev. T. F. Delaney by Col. I. G. Peetry, Warden, and the Catholic Guards and Prisoners in Ohio Penitentiary, Tuesday, 15th September, 1885.'¹⁸

The only official Church record of Father Delaney's work on this assignment is the transcript of the Ohio Penitentiary Baptismal Register, kept at St. Patrick's parish. The first record is dated 1885 (no month or day), and notes the baptism of John Alexander, by "Rev. Fr. L. F. Delaney, O.P." (The Dominican who transcribed the record assumed that Father Delaney had belonged to his order.)

Father Delaney's Successors at the "Pen"

Father Delaney's first successor as Chaplain was Father Paul Kehoe. Kehoe was "adopted" by Bishop Watterson while studying for the

priesthood at All Hallows College in Dublin, Ireland. He received sacred tonsure, minor orders and subdeaconship during Pentecost week, deaconship on Trinity Sunday, and priesthood on the 24th of June, 1885. After spending a few weeks visiting family and friends in Ireland, he came to Columbus, arriving in early November. He was appointed chaplain to the Penitentiary and offered his first Mass there on November 22, after which some 1500 convicts and 200 officers and visitors assembled in the "main hall" where, after songs by the Catholic choir, he addressed them on "The Divinity of the Christian Church."¹⁹

On April 4, 1886 Father Kehoe baptized eleven prisoners, no doubt the fruit of the seeds so well planted by Father Delaney. Fr. Kehoe served as chaplain for about a year, until by Easter of 1887 the Dominicans began their long and deservedly heralded service there. Father Kehoe served short assignments at Holy Family parish in Columbus and St. Lawrence O'Toole in Ironton, before returning permanently to Ireland because of illness.

Father Delaney at St. Patrick's

"For some months in 1882 Rev. T. F. Delaney was in temporary charge of the [Columbus St. Patrick] congregation, and in the latter part of that year Rev. A. O. Walker was made pastor. During Father Delaney's time the interior of the Church underwent many marked improvements under his supervision. The walls and ceilings were newly painted in beautiful designs and with handsome representations of the patron Saints of the Church. During Father Walker's incumbency he was appointed Vicar General and continued pastor with Father Delaney as assistant until 1885."

Hartley's history (pages 185-186) took these words directly from the sketch of the Church in Columbus written by Rev. Dennis Clarke for Lee's 1892 history (II/646). Despite the usual

quality of this source, it seems that the reference to 1882 is in error. Several small pieces of evidence point to this conclusion. First, St. Patrick's baptismal register first lists Delaney as administering that sacrament on June 7, 1884. Secondly, the *Columbian* of Aug. 30, 1884 indicates that he had just then moved to St. Patrick's, shortly after the assignments of newly ordained priests caused others to be moved. Thirdly, the frescoing of St. Patrick's mentioned by Clarke and Hartley was carried out in the fall of 1884, as witness the *Columbian* of that November 15th.

The completion of the redecoration of the church was mentioned in the *Columbian* of January 3, 1885. "For many years the Church was allowed to continue in its primitive plainness until Bishop Gallagher took the matter in hand, and by placing a new roof, elevating the ceiling, and making other and smaller improvements, extended the capacity of the edifice. The present rector, Father Walker, and his assistant, Father Delaney, began where Bishop Gallagher left off, and today are able to boast the handsomest Catholic Church in the city." The article goes on to describe the frescoes and paintings, even naming the artists.

While at St. Patrick's, Father Delaney seems not to have slackened his pace. In November of 1884 he gave a retreat for the young men of the parish, after which he and the young men, numbering over 200, formed the Catholic Temperance Lyceum. Very quickly, they opened a hall at 210 north Seventh (Grant Ave.), as an alternative to saloons, degraded theaters, or concert gardens.²⁰ He also worked with the school children. St. Patrick's morning, 1885 was taken up with the Mass and procession or parade, even as it is today. In the evening, the children of St. Patrick's school, under direction of Fr. Delaney, presented at Comstock's Opera House a reproduction the operetta *Genevieve*, which had been produced the previous June, along with "a beautiful drama called the 'Irish Brigade,' written

by himself, in which will be introduced a famous drill for the boys of his school." Musical selections were prepared by Prof. John Bayer for the occasion, which "was a perfect success in every respect." Proceeds were applied to liquidation of the church's debt.²¹

Nor did he neglect the spiritual life of the rest of the parish. On Sunday evenings during June there were devotions to the Sacred Heart, followed by Benediction. Father Delaney preached each of the four Sunday evenings on "The Devotion to the Sacred Heart," "The Object of Devotion to the Sacred Heart," "The Devotion to the Sacred Heart is a Cry of Hope," "The Devotion of the Sacred Heart is an Act of Faith."²²

His last baptism at St. Patrick's was dated August 6, 1885, the last one administered there before the priests of the Dominican Order took over.

At Toronto, Ohio

About the middle of October, 1885, Father Delaney, forced out of St. Patrick's by Bishop Watterson's decision to offer the parish to the Dominicans, was sent as first resident pastor to Toronto in Jefferson County in eastern Ohio. There were plans to build a church there, brick, with white brick front and trimmings, 40' by 80' by 85' to the top of the ceiling. The congregation furnished a house throughout for him. However, he seems to have accomplished nothing there.²³

He was succeeded as pastor by Rev. Alphonse Leyden, who arrived Sept. 1, 1886, when the foundations of the church were laid; the cornerstone was blessed Sept. 19. Fr. Leyden had to begin with nothing; he had altar stones sent from Columbus and had a frame altar built in a room of his house at Toronto; and had a sanctuary lamp, olive oil and burners, vestments, ciborium, etc. all sent from Columbus.²⁴ Why had Delaney left? He had proven his abilities to work with large numbers of children, youths, and

grown men during his busy life in Columbus. Most likely, the slow pace of the rural parish did not suit his temperament and he sought a more challenging assignment.

Nashville, Tennessee

Father Delaney found a new home in the Diocese of Nashville, which had only twenty-five priests at that time. He remained there from 1886 to 1891. He served at the Cathedral in Nashville and one of his duties from time to time was to attend the Catholics at St. Martin's church at Winchester, Franklin County, nearly 100 miles away. During those five years, he "made innumerable friends by his kindly and jovial disposition, friendships that remained with him during the many years that he was in New Orleans."²⁵

New Orleans

In 1891 he moved again, this time to the Archdiocese of New Orleans. There he at last found a permanent home -- in more ways than one, for in the city were two of his nieces, who were nurses attached to the French Hospital, and a cousin, Captain John P. Boyle of the police force. Father Delaney was appointed assistant pastor at St. Teresa parish in New Orleans on November 5, 1891 and served there for 7 1/2 years. Beginning in July, 1899 he served five years as pastor at St. Paul parish in Bayou Goula, a small rural parish in Ibeville civil parish. He then returned to New Orleans where he served as chaplain to St. Joseph's Convent and also served the deaf mute community.²⁶

In November of 1913 Father Delaney retired from his active ministry and asked that he be given no other assignment because of the "precarious condition" of his heart.²⁷ He moved to St. Francis de Sales rectory, where he assisted the pastor. In 1915 he was looking into the possibility of being admitted to a Lake Charles

Catholic hospital, where he could receive proper care but "would still have the consolation of being useful in the salvation of souls."²⁸ He died in New Orleans on May 12, 1916. His funeral Mass was offered at Immaculate Conception church and burial was in Greenwood Cemetery. In addition to his nieces and cousin in New Orleans, he was survived by his brother Daniel in Troy and another niece, Sister Mary Eudes, of the Order of the Good Shepherd, in Albany.

Reports at the time of Father Delaney's death mention his eloquence, his love of God, and his great charity. He was noted for his dramatic delivery and forceful spiritual appeals and his sermons attracted enormous throngs wherever he spoke. "He taught and practiced love for God and men.... He had a great devotion to the Blessed Mother of God, and said his beads over and over -- often ten times a day." Perhaps the most fitting, simple statement of his life is this: his eloquence and love brought many a soul to God.²⁹

Notes

- 1) Federal census, 1850, Troy, Ward 2, page 58. Form filled out by himself for Archdiocese of New Orleans, July, 1913; courtesy of Charles E. Nolan, Archivist, Archdiocese of New Orleans. St. Peter parish register, courtesy of Rev. Thomas K. Flanigan.
- 2) Federal Census, 1860, Troy, New York, Ward 9, page 902. Obituary in *The Morning Star*, May 20, 1916, courtesy of Charles E. Nolan.
- 3) Form filled out by himself for the Archdiocese of New Orleans, July, 1913. Obituary in *The Morning Star*, May 20, 1916. Obituary clipping, Diocese of Nashville, courtesy of Ann Krenson, Vice Chancellor.
- 4) Information courtesy of Joseph Coen, C.A., Archivist, Diocese of Brooklyn.
- 5) Information from the letter was supplied by Diocese of Portland Archivist Sr. Therese Pelletier
- 6) Ohio Penitentiary Board of Directors Journal (Ohio Historical Society, GR-4028), pp. 133, 219, 291, 292, 468, 477. *Columbus Daily Times*, May 5, 1884.
- 7) *Columbus Daily Times*, May 5, 1884. *Columbus city directories*, 1881 through 1884.
- 8) pp. 609-610

- 9) Annual Catholic directory. Lee, Alfred E., *History of the City of Columbus*, II/ 827
- 10) Alberta Wilkes, O.S.F., *Catholic Times*, Jan. 31, 1986
- 11) Lee, *op. cit.*
- 12) Ohio Penitentiary Board of Directors Journal, page 477
- 13) June 14 and July 5, 1884 *Catholic Columbian*
- 14) Alberta Wilkes, O.S.F., *Catholic Times*, Jan. 31, 1986.
- 15) *Columbian*, Oct. 11, 1884
- 16) Journal of pp 498-499. *Columbian*, Nov, 15, 1884
- 17) *Columbian*, August 8, 1885
- 18) *Columbian*, Sept. 19, 1885
- 19) *Columbian*, June 27, 1885, Nov. 14, 1885, and Nov. 28, 1885.
- 20) *Columbian*, November 29 and Dec. 6, 1884
- 21) *Columbian*, Feb. 21, 1885. March 14. March 21.
- 22) *Columbian*, June 6, 1885
- 23) *Columbian*, November 7, 1885 and Nov. 14, 1885 . Hartley, 428
- 24) A. M. Leyden to Fr. O'Reilly, Sept. 27, 1886 (Archives, Diocese of Columbus)
- 25) Obituary, *The Morning Star*, May 20, 1916. Obituary clipping, Diocese of Nashville. 1886 through 1891 Catholic directories. *Catholicity in Tennessee*, page 146. Courtesy of Ann Krenson.
- 26) Information supplied by Charles E. Nolan, Archivist, Archdiocese of New Orleans
- 27) Delaney to J. M. Laval, Nov. 26, 1913; Delaney Papers, Archives of the Archdiocese of New Orleans.
- 28) Delaney to James H. Blenk, New Orleans, July 5, 1915; same source.
- 29) *The Morning Star*, May 20, 1916
+++++

**Abstracts from
The Catholic Telegraph
(Continued, from Vol. XX, No. 8)**

(June 27, 1834, Episcopal Visitation, continued)

The Church of St. Paul is a substantial brick edifice, recently much enlarged, but still inadequate to the increasing numbers of the congregation. It is attended by the Catholics of New Lisbon, Hanover and a thickly settled territory of 10, or 12 miles round. The Catholics worshipping at the church are variously

estimated at from eight hundred, to one thousand souls. They have no resident Pastor. There were only six reputed sufficiently well instructed to be admitted to confirmation and it was truly distressing to observe that many had been suffered to reach their 20th year, without having been imbued with the first elements of a religious education, or received any other sacrament than baptism.

July 18, 1834

[Continuation of the story of the Bishop's visitation, to Hanover, Paris, Osnauburg, Canton, Beechland, Paris, Moreck, Fulton, Sugar Creek, Randolph, Wooster, Chippewa, Mansfield.]

August 1, 1834

[The Bishop visited Paris, Norwalk, Lower Sandusky, Tiffin, McCutchenville, Piatt's near West Liberty, Urbana, and Dayton.]

August 15, 1834

ST. MARY'S SEMINARY

Somerset, August 1st, 1834.

The public examination of the pupils of this Seminary commenced on the 30th and closed on the 31st of July. The exercises were conducted with great satisfaction to the visitors, among whom we observed several gentlemen and ladies from Lancaster and Zanesville. All were delighted with the proficiency of the young ladies, some of whom delivered in the conclusion of the second day their addresses of original composition. Below is a list of those who distinguished themselves in the different branches, with the prizes awarded for their industry and deportment in this Seminary.

[The classes listed are English Grammar, French Grammar, Geography, Arithmetic, Cronology, History, Writing, Music, and Drawing and Painting. Students mentioned are: Mary Alton of Cincinnati; Elizabeth Bradley of Perry County; Sophia Corbin of Green Bay; Mary Cornyan of Middletown, O.; Cecilia Dittoe of Somerset; Elizabeth Dittoe; E. Delong of Somerset; Angela Downey of Cincinnati; Martha Downey of

Cincinnati; Sarah Dungan (also Dugan); Ellen Ewing of Lancaster, O.; Mary Fink of Somerset; Mary Gallighar (also Gallighur) of Wooster, O.; Sophia Grignon (also Gregnon) of Green Bay; Sarah Higgins of Perry County; Ellen McCortney (also McCourtney) of Wheeling, Va.; Mary McDonnell; Sarah McFadden [McFadden]; Rosella McKinney; Mary Mead of Somerset; Mary Miser of Putnam; Elizabeth Moeler; Mary Mud [Mead?]; Mathilda Pine of Cincinnati; Catherine Reber (also Rebon) of Lancaster; E. Shehan of Ohio; Mary Slaven; Luca Work; Mary S. (or Mary Jane) Workman of Brownsville, Pa.]

September 26, 1834

[Ordinations, in Cathedral of St. Peter: Sept. 17: Mathias Wurtz, tonsure and acolyte; Joseph O'Mealy acolyte; John Dillon subdeacon. Sept. 19: John Dillon and James Conlan, deacons; Sept. 20: John Dillon and James Conlon, priests.]

November 7, 1834

Obituary

Died at Canton, Ohio, on the 26th of October, Mr. Jacob Short [Shorb], jr., son of a highly respectable family.

This young gentleman, in the bloom of youth and spring time of manhood, was attacked by a severe bilious disease, which baffled the best efforts of an attentive and skilful physician, and after an illness of only nine days, was hurried to the grave, amidst the sobs and tears of his amiable family, and an immense circle of most attached relatives and friends. By nature kind, generous and benevolent, he possessed, in an imminent degree, the happy but rare faculty of

attaching any one to himself, and of endearing himself to all who knew him.

February 27, 1835

OBITUARY

It is our melancholy duty to announce the death of the Rev. Daniel Joseph O'Leary, O.P. who departed this life at the Dominican Convent of St. Joseph, near Somerset, on Sunday, 8th instant, in his 51st year.

Father O'Leary was a native of Cork, Ireland, and a near relative of the distinguished Clergyman of the same name.... The subject of the present notice came to this country with the late Father Hill, from Rome, in 1821. He embraced the order of St. Dominic, the same year, at St. Rose's, Ky.; and, having nearly completed his course of studies in Europe, was ordained Priest by Right Rev. Dr. Flaget, Bishop of Bardstown, in 1823. Since that period, he has been an active and laborious Missionary in this diocese. By all who had the pleasure of Father O'Leary's acquaintance, his loss will be unerstood; but his merits as a Pastor were far beyond our praise, while his example as an humble and faithful Religious, will be long devoutly cherished, as a model worthy of their imitation, by his brethren. ...His remains were interred in the cemetery of St. Joseph's, after the performance of the usual funeral obsequies, and an appropriate and edifying discourse by the Rev. N. D. Young, Provincial of the Dominicans...

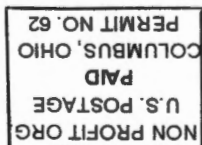
(To be continued.)

Catholic Record Society - Diocese of Columbus

197 E. Gay Street

Columbus, Ohio 43215

Donald M. Schlegel, editor



CHANCERY OFFICE
DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS
198 E. BROAD STREET
COLUMBUS OH 43215