SESQUI-CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

The Diocese of Pittsburgh is beginning to plan to commemorate the 150th year since it was established August 11, 1843. There will be a full year of celebration: September, 1992 - September, 1993.

The entire Diocese is to participate in this celebration. Each Deanery in the Diocese is represented on Bishop McDowell's Committee by three persons from each Deanery: a Priest, a Lay-Woman, and a Layman.

Each month of the Sesqui-Centennial Year will commemorate a special phase or activity of the Diocese.

SESQUI-CENTENNIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

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Bishop Vincent M. Leonard

Diocesan Chairman,
Bishop John B. McDowell

Public Relations,
Gerald J. Voros

Evangelization,
Dr. Veronica Morgan-Lee

Liturgical Celebrations,
Rev. M. Eric Diskin

Research & History,
Msg. Francis A. Glenn

CATHOLIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY

In preparation for the celebration of the 100th year of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, the Catholic Historical Society was founded May 27, 1940.

The goals of the Historical Society were to present the historical traditions of the past and to chronicle the growth and activities of the first hundred years of the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

One of the first products of the Catholic Historical Society was the publication of the symposium: "Catholic Pittsburgh’s One Hundred Years".

Preparations for the celebration of the 150th year of the Diocese of Pittsburgh present the opportunity for the Catholic Historical Society to participate in the Publication of an up-to-date history of the Diocese.

Plans call for the publication of an updated popular history which will appeal to the general reading public to arouse interest in the story of the Catholic Faith in the western part of the State of Pennsylvania.

Members are urged to work and pray for the success of this commemoration of this jubilee for a great Diocese.
BISHOPS & THE CIVIL WAR

J. Jansen

The Civil War in the United States came just after Catholics here had survived a difficult time known as the era of the Know-Nothings. In Pittsburgh that era meant riots, threats, occasionally real injury, and for a few, even death. For Catholic bishops it meant that leadership had to be exercised with both caution and spirit. (An example of that caution was the building of a church which was deliberately designed with very high windows, a precaution against stones, projectiles, etc.)

When the war actually began strong anti-Catholic feelings still survived in large sections of the population. Catholics were under considerable pressure to prove their patriotism. This was especially true for the bishops who led the Catholic church. One of the more spectacular examples of one of them of New York, an immigrant from Ireland, and therefore doubly suspect in the popular mind. When the war broke out, Archbishop Hughes ordered the Stars and Stripes to be flown from the top of St. Patrick’s Cathedral. This obvious act of patriotism combined with the archbishop’s strongly asserted loyalty to the Union did not escape the notice of President Lincoln. Archbishop Hughes, as well as Bishop Michael Domenec of Pittsburgh were both being considered by Lincoln’s government for some unofficial but very important diplomatic activity. The Union government was interested, extremely interested, in preventing any European aid or diplomatic recognition from being given to the Confederate government. The strategy hatched in Washington was quite simple. Many European monarchs were Catholic.

The chances were good that they would listen to the convictions of Catholic bishops, especially American Catholic bishops, and (hopefully) especially American Catholic bishops from the Union. Archbishop John Hughes was well known in Ireland as well as in the Vatican (the papacy was regarded by all nations, Catholic or not, as a major diplomatic force to be reckoned with. Bishop Domenec was a native of Spain, a powerful and important European nation. Lincoln’s advisors were convinced that if these two would present the Union position to the pope, the Spanish and the French governments and other rulers or influential Catholics the Confederacy could be effectively neutralized internationally. Bishop Domenec was asked to take the Union message to the Catholic monarchy in Spain, and Archbishop Hughes was to do the same to Rome, and if possible also to France, Ireland and perhaps England. Both men accepted the assignment.

Archbishop Hughes was well received wherever he went according to the reports that came back from Europe. He seemed to generate good will and often open support for the Union. However, the best he got from Pope Pius IX was a kind of neutrality, which was still better than papal opposition to the North’s position. Bishop Domenec went to Spain and spoke to the queen and the Spanish government. We do not have a great amount of information on his mission, but some time later Archbishop Hughes said this about Pittsburgh’s bishop: “Bishop Domenec, of all those who had been sent by the Government of the United States to arrange these matters, is the only one who had ever really succeeded in his mission.” This was a particularly high compliment for the delicate nature of the negotiations, but especially for coming from Archbishop Hughes, who, when some
Gathered Fragments

Southern Catholics accused him of preventing any diplomatic recognition of the Confederacy by Europe, replied that he hoped it was true. (To a very great extent it was!)

The Confederacy quickly recognized a missed opportunity, and they, too, sent a delegation to Rome, hoping that through papal recognition they could also get diplomatic recognition and support from European Catholic monarchs. The pope, of course, received the two Confederate delegates. Early in their conversation he asked them if they were Catholic. They replied in the negative, which also pretty well describes the rest of their audience with Pius IX. In Richmond Jefferson Davis realized his mistake. For one final try he chose Patrick N. Lynch, the Catholic Bishop of Charleston as his next official messenger to the papacy. Bishop Lynch made the trip, but unfortunately it was too late. While he was in Rome the Civil War ended. The bishop found himself uncomfortably classified as a traitor by the United States government and was not able to return to this country until he had taken the oath of loyalty to the Union. When he finally got back to his diocese of Charleston it was reported that for the rest of his days he tended strictly to church business and had nothing more at all to do with politics.

BRIEF NOTES

St. Nicholas Croatian Church on Pittsburgh’s North Side is the oldest Croatian Church in America. The Church marked its 95th Anniversary on December 3, 1989.

Rev. Edward F. McSweeney, the Diocesan Archivist, recently made an informal presentation to St. Paul Cathedral First Friday Series on March 2 entitled, "The Diocesan Archives: A Window on Pittsburgh’s Catholic Heritage."

The Diocesan Archives is the depository of records generated by the Catholic Diocese over the last century and more. Among those are the records of Diocesan bishops, their administrators, the clergy, the parishes, religious institutions, Catholic lay organizations and prominent Catholic men and women. We owe a debt of gratitude to those who have contributed to this collection because they have helped preserve our Catholic heritage. We should ALL be on outlook for valuable and perishable records hidden in attics, basements and private collections of our senior citizens. If you know of such material help us preserve our religious heritage by contacting one of the officers of the Society or Father McSweeney.

The Pittsburgh Catholic first published on March 16, 1844 is the oldest continuous Catholic paper in the United States. All the files of the paper are in tact and are a valuable source of history on the growth of the Church in the area.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Society will be in October, 1990. Watch The Pittsburgh Catholic for an announcement as to time and place. Hope to see you there!
"GATHERED FRAGMENTS" is the official publication of the Catholic Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania. The name of this publication was inspired by the motto: "Gather up the fragments that remain, lest they be lost." This sage advice appears on the title page of the Rev. A. A. Lambing's book, A HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH AND ALLEGHENY published in 1880. Msgr. Andrew Arnold Lambing, the first historian of the Diocese, was one of the founders of the Western Pennsylvania Historical Society. His motto is, at once, a description of both the purpose and style of this newsletter. It is the purpose and style of this newsletter. It is hoped that "Gathered Fragments" will serve as a vehicle for communicating the news and views of the Society and disseminating bits and pieces of interesting information. Advice, constructive criticism, suggestions, and most of all, contributions (announcements, articles, book reviews, news items etc.) are encouraged. We look forward to hearing from:

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The purpose of the Catholic Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania is to discover, collect, and disseminate information about the role played by the Catholic Church, Catholic Organizations and individual Catholics in the History of Western Pennsylvania.

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