

ARCHDIOCESE OF CARDIFF



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Old photographs enhanced and reproduced by Damian Chidgey.

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A
SHORT HISTORY OF
ST. DAVID'S CATHEDRAL
CARDIFF

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OF



ST. DAVID'S

METROPOLITAN CATHEDRAL

CARDIFF

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A SHORT HISTORY OF ST. DAVID'S CATHEDRAL, CARDIFF

The revival of Catholicism in South East Wales in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is best illustrated by the building and development of two of the main churches in the area. St. Mary's, Newport (dealt with in another pamphlet) and the church that is the subject of this booklet - **St. David's, Cardiff.**

Before 1800, the scattered adherents to the Old Faith were served by secular and Jesuit missionary priests who risked their lives to bring the Mass and the Sacraments to these recusants, The Penal times found, in South Wales, many Catholics who remained loyal to their Faith in spite of fines, imprisonment and even death. The dungeons of Cardiff's castle and the cells of its gaols witnessed the deaths of some fifty Catholic recusants. Out of the

scores who were confined there, St. Philip Evans
Cardiff in and St. John Lloyd (The Cardiff Martyrs) after
Penal Times their confinement in the Castle, were hanged,
drawn and quartered at the Gallows Field in the
Roath area of the town on 22nd July 1679. Thereafter and in the
early 1700s, priests, including a Fr. John Scudamore and "*that
jolly worthy Jesuit, Rev. Thomas Brewer*" ministered secretly in
the area from headquarters in Pyle where they were under the
protection of the local Catholic squire. In 1744, the Pyle "safe
house" was abandoned and the, mainly Jesuit, priests travelled
occasionally from their centre in Bristol. At that time, so well had
the penal laws worked in Glamorgan that the Cardiff Custom
House was able to report to Trinity House in October 1745,
"*Thank God, we han't one gentleman in this county of any figure
or fortune that is a Papist or a Non-juror, and we are told there
are very few of the meaner sort.*"

From 1787 a Father Robert Plowden served the Cardiff-Swansea area from a base in Cowbridge. In 1800 it was reckoned that there were but just a few Catholics living in the town - some native Welsh, a few Irish and a Bavarian family of clockmakers

living in Queen Street (the main shopping centre then as now). In 1804 it was arranged that Cardiff (as with Newport) should then come under the Usk mission. Father Patrick Portal who was based in Merthyr and later in Newport, would come occasionally to minister to the known Catholics in Cardiff. His ministry seemed to flourish and the numbers of the Faithful grew rapidly so that a regular monthly Mass was held in the house of a Mr. John Donoghue at 21 Union Buildings (now part of the Morgan Arcade). Some time later, the same priest hired a room in the Red Lion Inn, at the corner of Merthyr Road (now North Road) and Queen Street. Unsurprisingly he was given notice by the landlord in 1826. The story is told that a local resident - "brain washed" by centuries of wild anti-Catholic prejudice - promised and paid a half crown to one, John Driscoll to point out the priest as he arrived at the *Red Lion* by the Merthyr Mail Coach. Expecting to see some sort of monster, he expressed his wonder and admiration when introduced to Father Portal - a refined Irish gentleman.

Mass was then moved to a large room in Nicholls Arms (Lion Hotel) at the top of Mary Ann Street. (This street, now flanked by Jury's Hotel and the prestigious Cardiff International Arena, was notorious as an overcrowded slum with almost every house being a drinking den!)

Between 1830 and 1840, the first Bute Dock was constructed and hundreds of labourers, many of them Irish, were employed in this venture as well as in building new canal wharves. In a "Klondike-like" development between 1830 and 1838, Irish immigrants rose to more than 500.

First Signs of Growth Sunday congregations rapidly outgrew the available space and better premises had to be sought urgently. Adequate accommodation was at first provided at the home of Mr. Joe Davies of 131 Bute Street where three ground floor rooms were knocked into one to provide a fair sized chapel.

Father Portal died in Newport in 1835 and the following year Father Edward Metcalfe and Father Leonard Calderbank served the Cardiff Mission and they were helped out by Fathers Burke, Bevan and Larkin. All were non-resident pastors. In March 1839 Cardiff was at last to have a priest of its own when the first resident priest since the Reformation arrived to take charge of the Mission (*although we shall refer to the "parish" this term was not used until 1918*). The priest appointed was a Father Dwyer who came to live at 131 Bute Street but his stay in Cardiff was a short one and he left to take up another appointment the same year. In July 1839 Father Patrick Millea came and for some time shared the Cardiff Mission with Fr. C. Cook and Fr. J. Kealy.

Until this time England and Wales was divided into four districts each under the care of a Vicar Apostolic. The Western District, which covered a vast area, including the whole of Wales was administered by Bishop Peter Augustine Baines, OSB. In 1839, he urged the Cardiff community, now that it had a resident priest, to build its own church - a task which was to prove extremely difficult. The worthy citizens of Cardiff tolerated the Irish labourers and their families as long as they remained semi-itinerant and there remained the possibility that they would eventually go away.

Once plans were afoot to build a Catholic chapel, local people showed great fear. They would not tolerate a "Popish Mass-house" from which their families would be endangered by the vassals and secret agents of the priest". In August 1841, Fr. Millea had to report that prejudice was "*very, very great throughout the entire district.*"

The poor Catholics contributed their pennies for a church and there was support from a fund set up to assist church - building in South Wales, which was described as "*the poorest of all the districts*" of Britain. Lord Bute, who owned most of the land

The Struggle to Build a Church

in Cardiff refused permission to build on sites in Canal Street and Charles Street. He had simply ignored repeated pleas for permission to build since 1834, by just not answering letters sent by leading Catholics from as far away as Yorkshire.

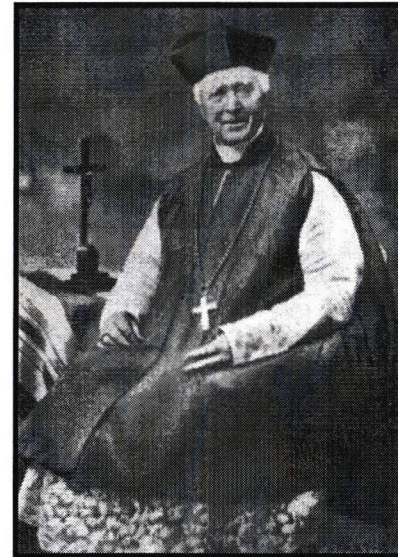
Daniel O'Connell - the "Liberator" - himself took up the cause and cited Lord Bute's action in the House of Commons as a typical example of English landowners' attitudes to the Irish and thus the difficulty in Cardiff became the subject of comment in some national daily newspapers. *Ironically, Lord Bute's son and heir became a Catholic and was one of the Catholic Church's greatest benefactors in South Wales generously providing sites for churches, schools and orphanages - particularly in Cardiff.*

Fr. Millea, confident that the quest for a church would eventually meet with success, travelled around Ireland collecting funds for the building of a new church in Cardiff. At the bottom of David Street there was a large suitable site owned by a builder named John Highwall. He lacked the funds to develop the site himself. An Italian parishioner, James Stauvenghi, in collaboration with some friendly small businessmen, without disclosing the reason for its acquisition, made an offer for the site which was accepted. When the intention of the buyers and the purpose for which it was to be used became known, Highwall attempted to have the contract annulled. In this he was unsuccessful and, on the site, Fr. Millea erected the first permanent Catholic church in Cardiff since the Reformation.

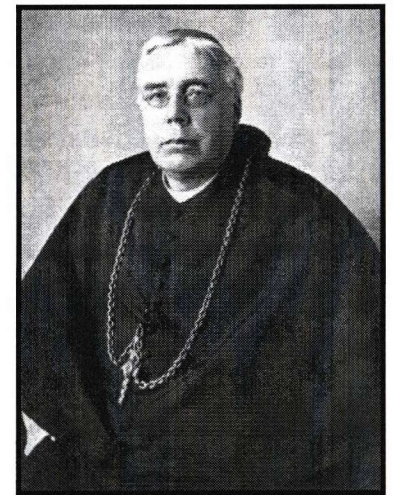
The new church was completed in 1842. The total cost of the project including the purchase of the site was £2,124 17s 8d.

This amount also included Architect's fees. While these negotiations were being started a significant change in the organisation of the Church had been taking place. Encouraged by its growth in membership, in England and Wales and the easing of so many of the penal laws against the Church here, Rome had acceded to requests to increase the Vicars Apostolic in 1840 and

**A Vicar
Apostolic
for Wales**



**Right Rev. Thomas Joseph Brown
D.D. O.S.B.
First Bishop of Newport and Menevia
1850 - 1880**



**Right Rev. John Cuthbert Hedley
D.D. O.S.B.
Second Bishop of Newport
1880 - 1895**



**Most Rev.
James Romanus Bilborrow
O.S.B.
First Archbishop of Cardiff
1916 - 1920**



**Most Rev.
Francis Joseph Mostyn D.D.
Second Archbishop of Cardiff
1921 - 1939**

had doubled their number from four to eight.

Included in the rearrangement was the consecration of a Bishop as Vicar Apostolic of the Welsh District. Chosen for this arduous post was Dr. Thomas Joseph Brown, OSB a brilliant scholar and outstanding monk who had been the Prior of Downside for six years. To the great joy of the new Bishop and his congregation, but it must be said, to the dismay of many local worthies and residents, the new church was opened on Wednesday 14th October 1842 with a Pontifical High Mass celebrated by the new Vicar Apostolic of the Welsh District.

The new church was dedicated to St. David at the request of a benefactress, Lady Catherine Eyre of Bath, (Bishop Brown's birthplace) who had given £3,000 for the building of two churches one in Cardiff and one in Swansea - with the request that they be dedicated to the Patron of Wales. In the Directory of 1842 (probably printed in 1841) there occurs the following statement.....

"the Church (in Cardiff) is now commenced through the charity of the late Mrs. Eyre of Bath and Thomas Eyre Esq. but further assistance will be essential for completion"

in another report that year, Bishop Brown states..

"The congregation fluctuates between 1,000 and 1,700 and the chapel has been commenced to replace the densely crowded ground floor of the cottage from which the window frame must be removed on Sundays in order that hundreds exposed to the weather in the roofless backyard, may discharge their religious duties".

Soon after the opening of the new church work was commenced on the building of a presbytery. This was made possible by a loan of £360 @ 4%. The Directory of 1843 gave the news that a priest's house was being erected adjacent to the new church. Work commenced on 10th January, 1843. It was completed and all financial liability had been met apart from a ground rent of £14. 5s. 0d which was payable half-yearly. Fr. Millea had collected £140 from his own poor parishioners. Later

Bishop Brown, who had to be very careful with the money of his impoverished flock, paid £70 for a new organ for the church and there is an item in his day-book - "4/- for cab in quest of an organ." Having achieved his ambition of building a church and presbytery, Fr. Millea's difficulties appeared to be over but a serious incident occurred in 1847 which was to cause him great distress. A Mr. John Lewis was allegedly stabbed and killed by an Irishman, Mr. J. O'Connor. Prejudice, never far below the surface, erupted and resulted in anti-Catholic rioting in the town. Even though Fr. Millea succeeded in calming the trouble makers who had threatened to destroy the new church, the effect on him was devastating and he could no longer feel secure in his mission afterwards. He asked the Bishop to relieve him of his post. He moved to Dowlais where he continued to work for the care of souls.

St. David's was then given over to the care of Fr. Thomas Cody with Fr. Placid Sinnott OSB as his assistant. They were to remain in Cardiff until 1854 when Father Sinnott took over the Mission at Merthyr Tydfil.

At this stage of the renaissance of Catholicity in Cardiff and the surrounding district, the Fathers of the Institute of Charity made their appearance in the mission-fields of South Wales. Dr. Brown always struggling to find the priests to serve the ever expanding Catholic communities found himself extremely short of priests when Irish immigration exploded in the 1840's as a result of the dreadful potato famine in their land. He asked the Institute to take a number of parishes in N.Glamorgan and Gwent, but the Institute refused. In 1848 he offered them Cardiff. He wrote to Fr. Provincial Pagani, "*The railway to be opened next year will make Cardiff a suburb of Newport*". He hoped that the Rosminians would take an interest in the mission which though very poor had a good church and house. This request was also refused.

With the Restoration of the Hierarchy in 1850, Bishop

Brown was made Bishop of Newport and "St. David's" but this was changed to "Menevia" to avoid confusion.

In 1854 he wrote again to the Provincial of the order which had taken on the care of Catholic souls in Newport, stating that Cardiff had over 5,000 Catholics - far too many for a single priest. The Bishop still wanted the Rosminians to accept the mission and to build a new chapel (later St. Peter's). He suggested that the Order send a priest to Cardiff for two months to become acquainted with the needs of the mission. The priest could share the house there with Fr. Placid.

Brother Mitchell, a novice of the Institute arrived in June 1854, the first Rosminian to be resident in Cardiff. He had been assistant at St. Mary's, Newport and an added bonus was that he was an Irish speaker. With the help of Father Dominic Cavalli I.C., based at St. Mary's, Newport, he administered the Mission until 16th July when Father Fortunatus Signini I.C. joined him.

Bro. Mitchell left for Rugby in August and Fr. Costa and Fr. Stephen Bruno were appointed to Cardiff within the next twelve months, With Fr. Signini they made up a formidable and most successful team and are remembered with affection for the outstanding work they did for the development and acceptance of the Church in the area and for the growth and integration of the Catholic Education system in the town. It is an indication of the success of the Mission that in 1855, on the Feast of St. Clare, 351 candidates were presented to Bishop Brown to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The first objective of the Fathers of Charity was to build a new school. The one built in the early days by Father Millea was now quite inadequate. Their hope was to convert the original small school into an Infant Department and build a new for the older children. Their hope came to fruition and on 17th October 1855, the foundation stone of a

A Period of Rapid Growth and Building

new school in David Street was laid. This foundation stone had remained before the altar in St. David's Church from the previous Sunday for all to see. After the ceremony of laying the stone, £30 for the school fund was collected. The new school opened on 1st September, 1856 and on roll were 150 boys, 130 girls and 120 infants. In 1857, the staff at St. David's included Father John Baily and Father Michael Garelli - the latter having been sent as an additional priest to help cope with large numbers of Catholics now living in Cardiff (By 1861 it was estimated that there were 10,000 Catholics - one third of the population.) In 1859, Father Lawrence Gastaldi was appointed Rector and during his time that the Catholic portion of the cemetery and the cemetery chapel were opened and consecrated. An outstanding priest, he left Cardiff on his appointment as Bishop of Saluzzo (and later Archbishop of Turin) and it was then that St. David's and St. Peter's (opened in 1861) were divided. Father Signini was appointed as Prior of St. David's and Father Bruno, Prior of St. Peter's.

Father Charles Caccia became, Rector of Cardiff from 1865 to 1868, saw the opening of the enlarged grammar school in David Street in April 1867. Before leaving Cardiff, Father Caccia had commenced teaching the children at the Workhouse and subsequently the inmates of Cardiff Gaol. Dr. Angelo Maria Rinolfi succeeded Father Caccia for a short while. In 1870 Fathers Signini and Garelli left for other missions and were replaced at St. David's by Fathers Akeroyd and Hayde.

Late in 1874 Father Bruno returned to St. David's for a stay which was to witness some very important changes for Cardiff. In 1880 Bishop Brown died at the age of 82. He had been Bishop of the area for forty years and had seen a massive expansion of the Church especially in South Wales. A Benedictine monk of Downside, it had been decreed that he should choose every one of his Chapter Canons from the monks of the community at Belmont Priory, Cleohanger, near Hereford, (now Belmont Abbey) and that the Monastery would be his Cathedral. This practice had been

known in pre-Reformation times but was revived unusually for Bishop Brown when he was created Bishop of Newport and Menevia.

He was succeeded by Bishop John Cuthbert Hedley who was also a Benedictine monk. An outstanding intellect, Bishop

Bishop Hedley moves to Cardiff Hedley was much sought after as a preacher, retreat giver and spiritual writer. In 1855 the diocese was redefined as the Diocese of Newport which now covered only the counties

of Glamorganshire, Monmouthshire and Herefordshire, He disagreed with the view of his predecessor that Cardiff would soon become "*a suburb of Newport*" and moved the Bishop's Residences from Bullingham and Chepstow to Cardiff, which he saw as becoming the major administrative unit of the area. One of the very first requests he was to receive when he moved to Cardiff was from the Fathers of Charity. Having done a marvellous job of building up and extending the Church in

Diocesan Clergy Return to St. David's Cardiff and the surrounding area, they now asked for help, as they had insufficient staff to cater for the ever-growing need for priests. In answer to their plea, St. David's was placed in the care of the secular clergy. On 20th

December 1882, a Father Butler came to reside there with the Fathers of Charity.

On 13th August that same year, Father Bruno left St. David's ending twenty eight years of devoted service by the Rosminian Fathers of the Institute of Charity. Father Bruno's tremendous contribution to the Church in Cardiff over many years, in difficult circumstances, and his vision in preparing the ground for a new and imposing church building was the legacy he left to his grateful people. The new Rector was Rev. W. Williams who until then had been in charge of the Tredegar Mission. Father Matthews was appointed as his Assistant.

The 1842 church described in the Catholic directory of

1843 as “a spacious church of imposing architecture” was now inadequate and the great responsibility of finding and procuring a site for a church to cater for the congregation fell to Father Williams. His quest was rewarded when land in Charles Street, then occupied by Mr. Trice’s school, came on the market.

The price, however, was exorbitant - no less than £4,600. A building fund had, in fact, been inaugurated by Father Bruno before he left, as he had foreseen that a new church would be required in the near future.

The task of designing this new church was entrusted to Messrs. Pugin and Pugin the famous Catholic Architects of London. They planned a building in “*Early Decorated*” style with a nave 148 feet long, 70 feet wide and 72 feet high. Central arches were eliminated so that a clear view of the High Altar could be had from all parts of the church. To make this possible a very large roof span was necessary, a factor which caused headaches and a great deal of delay when the work of restoring this same building began after its destruction in World War 11.

The High Altar was constructed by Messrs. Boulton of Cheltenham at a cost of £1,000. The contractor was Mr. John Devlin of Glasgow and the contract was in the sum of £10,500. In less than three years the church was built and cleared of debt.

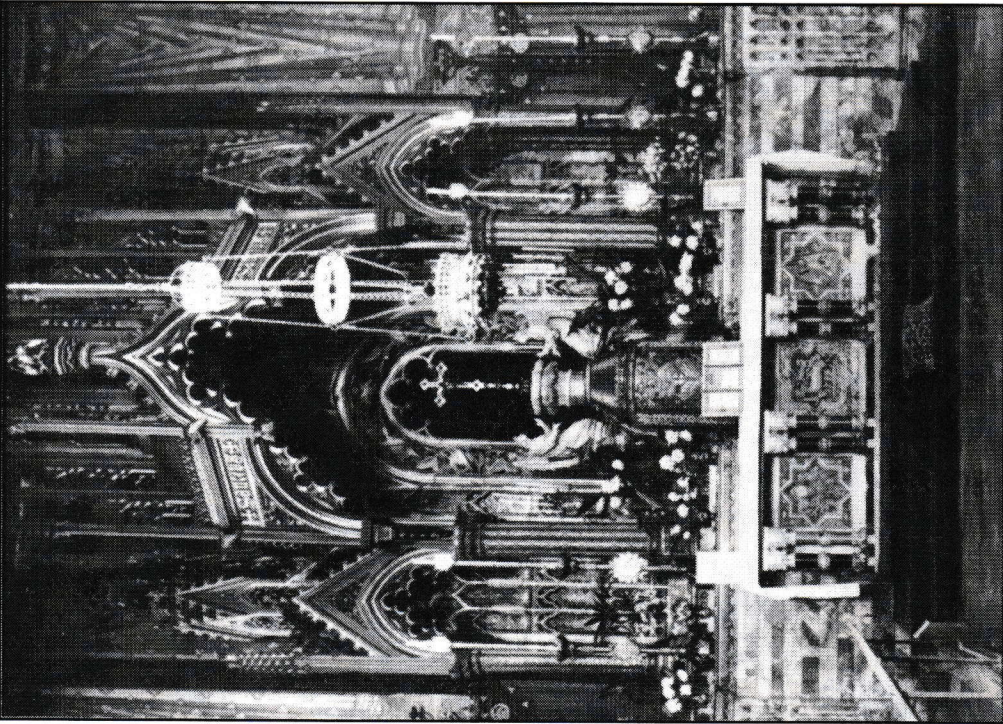
The day of its consecration, by Bishop Hedley, was an occasion of great happiness for Cardiff Catholics. The Bishop of Clifton and the Priors of Ampleforth and Downside were assembled on the sanctuary, together with the representatives of the Franciscan and Benedictine Orders and members of the Secular Clergy. In the congregation were the Marquess and Marchioness of Bute generous benefactors to this and other Catholic institutions in Cardiff. The sermon was preached by the famous Jesuit, Father Bernard Vaughan. Among those who spoke at the celebratory luncheon after the ceremony were Bishop

Plans for a New Church

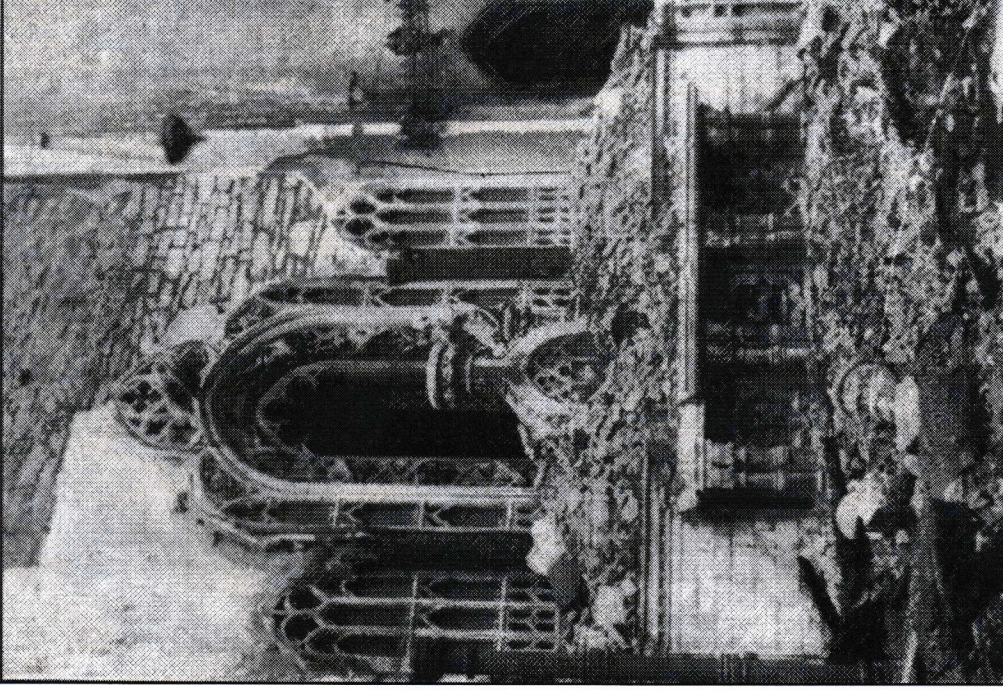
An Occasion Of Great Joy !



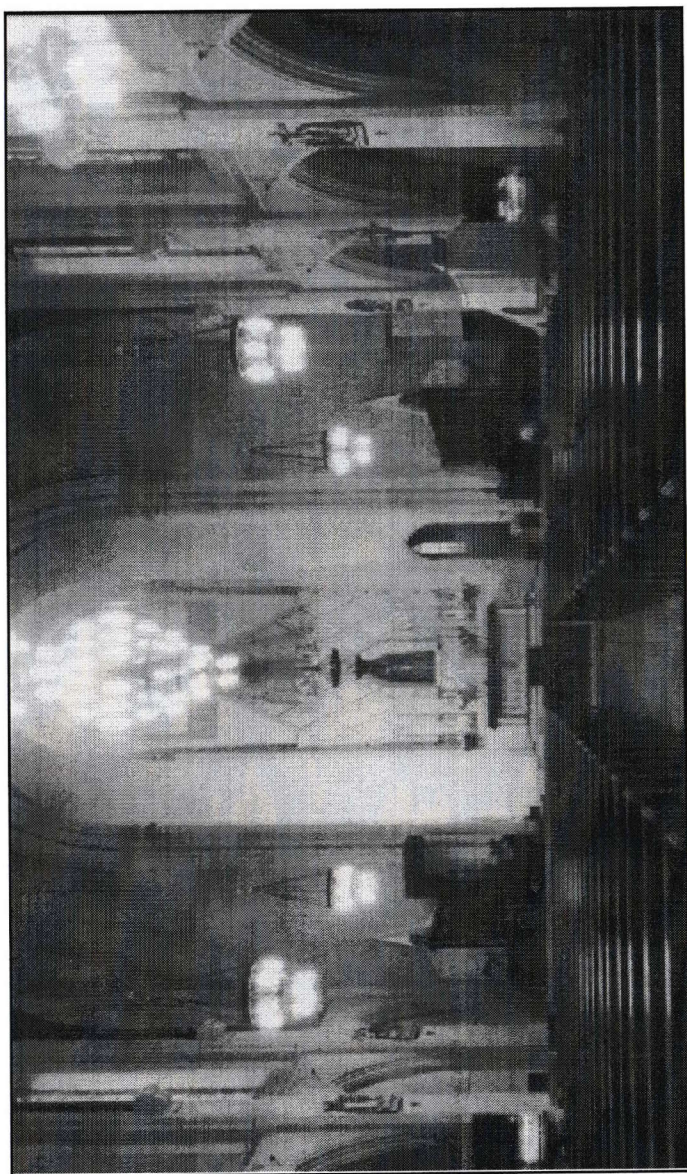
A Photograph of St. David's Church which was opened in 1888 taken before it became the Cathedral in 1921 and before electric lighting was installed



The beautifully ornate high altar of the pre-World War II St. David's Cathedral Cardiff



The high altar was destroyed by enemy bombing on the night of 3rd March 1941. It was to lay derelict for eighteen years.



The restored Cathedral which was re-opened on 2nd March 1959

Hedley, Prior Raynal of Belmont, Father Williams and Alderman Carey the Catholic Mayor of Cardiff.

But the development of St. David's was not yet complete for in the following year - 1888, a Convent was established with the Sisters of Providence (Rosminian) taking up residence in David Street, in the building that had been the original presbytery.

During that year too, the first Conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Society in the Diocese was founded at St. David's. Then the original church was re-opened as a parish hall on Shrove Tuesday 1891.

In recognition of his wonderful work in the parish, Father Williams was raised to the dignity of Domestic Prelate and made Vicar General of the Diocese. While Mgr. Williams was at St. David's, his predecessor Father Stephen Bruno died at the home of his sister near Cork. In acknowledgement of his 28 years labour in Cardiff, Bishop Hedley consecrated the new St. Anne's Chapel on 12th January 1889 and dedicated it to his memory. . A plaque commemorating his great contribution in helping to build up the Catholic community in Cardiff can, still be seen in the Cathedral .

After administering the parish for well-nigh twelve years, Monsignor Williams died on 24th September 1895. He had not spared himself during that time and at his death the parish was firmly established as a self-supporting unit free from debt and enjoying a new church, a convent, a school and a community hall.

Monsignor Williams was succeeded as Rector of St. David's by a man whose incumbency became legendary - Father Alphonsus Van den Heuvel. This much-loved priest was in post for twenty seven years and saw many changes in the further development of the parish entrusted to his care and helped bear the burden of the trials of his congregation during the sad losses and difficulties of the First World War.

It was during that war, in 1915, that Bishop John Cuthbert Hedley died. This great and learned man had the vision to recognise that Cardiff was destined to be the administrative centre

of South Wales when he moved his residence to Llanishen and it was during his tenure of office as Bishop of Newport, that in 1905, Cardiff, was raised to the status of a city. Bishop Hedley played a significant role in advising Rome that changes should be made in the ecclesiastical government of Wales. In the year of his death the Pope issued a Bull called "Cambria Celtica". This established Cardiff as an "Archdiocese" and no doubt, had he lived, Bishop Hedley would have been its first Archbishop.

The first Archbishop was to be James Romanus Bilsborrow, the Bishop of Port Louis in Mauritius. Like both his predecessors he was a Benedictine monk. His rule over the Archdiocese was to be brief - just four years before ill-health forced his resignation in 1920 and his return to Mauritius where he died. It was upon his appointment that Rome proposed, most unusually, that in recognition of the long Benedictine contribution to the Faithful in Wales the new Archbishop should have *two Cathedral-churches* - one at Belmont and one at Cardiff - and two *Chapters of Canons* - a Secular one and one composed of Benedictine monks.

For four years this was discussed with the Vatican, Archbishop Bilsborrow was very much opposed to the proposal because of its impracticability and the difficult questions it would raise. During those years the Chapter did not meet and the Archbishop did not have a recognised Cathedral. Eventually Rome decided that there should be one Cathedral in Cardiff and one set of Canons only. To acknowledge the Benedictine role in the growth of Catholicism in Wales and Herefordshire, Belmont was raised to the status of an Abbey. Archbishop Bilsborrow left Cardiff soon after the matter was determined.

It was a great joy for Father Van (the name by which he was popularly known) and the St. David's congregation when the Mother Church of Cardiff's oldest mission (parish) since the time of

the Reformation was declared the Cathedral of the new Archdiocese of Cardiff on 12th March, 1920. Father Van thus became the first Administrator of the Cathedral.

On 7th March, 1921, Bishop Francis Mostyn of Menevia - a member of a leading Welsh Catholic family - was named the second Archbishop of Cardiff and was enthroned in his Cathedral on the Feast of St. Joseph that same month. At this inaugural celebration a telegram was received from David Lloyd George which stated, "All Welshmen, without distinction of creed, will rejoice in today's ceremony".

After a long and successful stewardship, Father Alphonsus Van den Heuvel, to the sorrow of his flock, decided to retire as Cathedral Administrator and returned to his native Holland. His successor was named as Very Rev. Canon Daniel Joseph Hannon, an outstanding administrator who had been serving on the Cathedral staff as assistant to Father Van. His potential had been recognised when in 1920 he had been named a Canon of the Cathedral Chapter although he had never been a "parish priest".

For the next seventeen years he worked as Administrator with the gentle and benevolent Archbishop Mostyn and his clergy and saw continued Catholic development of the Church in Cardiff with the opening of new parishes and schools and a steady supply of new priests, although times were not easy with the industrial depression of the nineteen thirties causing unemployment and distress for many. Towards the end of that period the threat of war overshadowed the lives of all. It became a fact when on the 3rd September 1939, a state of war was proclaimed. Less than eight weeks later, Archbishop Mostyn was taken to his eternal reward and the Cathedral witnessed, for the first time, the solemn occasion of the lying in state and funeral of its Archbishop. The Apostolic Delegate sang the Requiem Mass and the panegyric was preached by Bishop Michael McGrath, the Bishop of Menevia.

It was Dr. Michael McGrath who was named to succeed to the See of Cardiff and he was enthroned in April 1940 when hostilities were at the soon-to-be-forgotten "phoney war" stage.

Archbishop McGrath Within months France had been overrun and the Battle of Britain began. There followed a campaign of night bombings dubbed "blitzes."

Cardiff received the first of these on 2nd January 1941. It was the unhappy duty of Archbishop McGrath to officiate at a burial service at a communal graveside for the victims of that air attack. An even larger air raid occurred on the night of March 3rd that year when many citizens were killed. Among the buildings destroyed was St. David's Cathedral. Its original construction meant that the unusually wide roof space was enclosed in a form of barrel-vaulting. Incendiary bombs pierced the slates and ignited in the roof space and the tinder-dry wood was immediately consumed, raining down fire on the interior. Nothing could be done to douse the flames and priests risked their lives going into the building to remove the Blessed Sacrament and some of the sacred vessels. The work of Monsignor Williams and the other pioneers who built the Cathedral was undone in a few short hours. Word went round the city that St. David's was on fire and parishioners, many of them in tears, rushed to assist - but could do little except mourn for the Cathedral of which they were so proud and had now been reduced to an empty burned-out shell.

The pages of history were turned back almost a century when the congregation was forced to return to worship in the parish hall - on the corner of David Street and Bute Terrace "that spacious church" of which Bishop Brown boasted in 1842. Work began immediately on getting the building ready for the celebration of Mass. On 4th March 1941, a temporary altar was erected while everything that could be salvaged was removed from the Cathedral. On the Sunday following that eventful air-

raid, Masses were celebrated in what for many years afterwards was to be known as "St. David's Pro-Cathedral."

An entry in the Parish diary for that date simply states that "everything is topsy-turvey at present" A Cardiff Catholic firm "Curran's" came to the aid of the harassed Administrator. Mr. Jack Curran and Mr. Eugene Curran - well-known benefactors to Catholic causes - sent men from their departments to help turn the Hall into a Pro-Cathedral. Altars and altar-rails were erected and salvaged seating was installed. Scar marks on many of the seats were a grim reminder of the fate of the Cathedral.

Soon after the destruction of the Cathedral, Father, (later Monsignor) Peter F. Gavin arrived to replace Canon William Coonan as Administrator of the pro-Cathedral. He faced a double task, first of all to make the original church suitable for the celebration of the Holy Mass and secondly, the far greater responsibility of planning for the restoration of the Cathedral to its former beauty, in keeping with the great tradition of the past. There were to be twelve years of war-time hardship and post-war restrictions and shortages before the work could commence on the rebuilding of the shell of Pugin's original church, Eventually the task of designing a restored Cathedral within the frame-work of the old and in keeping with its Gothic design was entrusted to Mr. T. G. Price of Messrs. F. R. Bates & Son. This Firm had been responsible for much work in the Archdiocese and had a long-standing association with the Archdiocesan Authorities.

Rebuilding begins in 1953

In researching the original Pugin designs, it was discovered that a plan had been drawn up for the inclusion of a bell tower - but this had not been built. It was now decided that the building would be restored as envisaged originally, Additionally, since it was built as a parish church and not a cathedral, it lacked a sanctuary and sacristies appropriate for Pontifical ceremonies. This defect was to be remedied in the new building by the inclusion of a larger sanctuary and an extension to

the sacristies.

On 1st October 1953 work began on clearing what was now a dilapidated site and the addition of a replacement roof - a task not without problems in view of the span of 50 feet between walls and a height of 70 feet at the apex. All this had to be accomplished within the limits of expenditure and conformity to the regulations of the War Damage Commission. Its demand for a two-stage restoration resulted in a delay of eighteen months before interior work could be commenced. The work was not finally completed until 31st January 1959.

Contemporary "Stations of the Cross" and the statues on the side altars were commissioned and the organ is reckoned to be one of the finest in the Principality. The stone altars, i.e. the High Altar, St. John the Baptist's Altar, St. Joseph's Altar and the new chapel of St. Pius X were consecrated by Mgr. Gavin on 4th of February and the Cathedral was reopened for services on the morning of Friday 6th February at the 7.30 am. Mass. The great traditions of St. David's parish were reflected in the numbers who came to worship God in their beloved St. David's on that day and on the following Sunday.

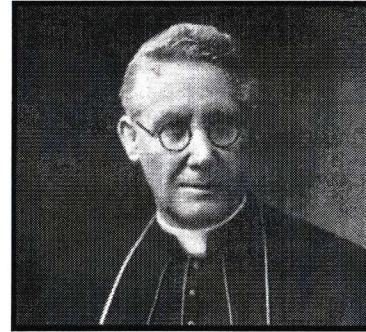
The date for the solemn re-opening of the Cathedral was set most appropriately for Monday 2nd March - the day after the

Feast of St. David and eighteen years - but one

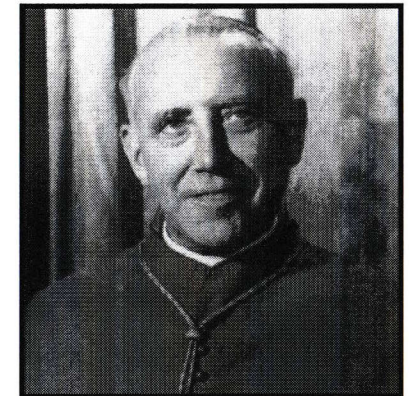
The Solemn Re-opening day - since its destruction by bombing in 1941. His Grace the Archbishop of Cardiff, Archbishop

McGrath, sang the Pontifical High Mass, in the

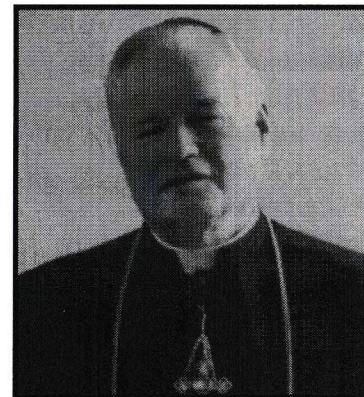
presence of Cardinal Godfrey, the Archbishop of Westminster and His Excellency the Apostolic Delegate to Great Britain, Archbishop Gerald O'Hara. The sermon was preached by Bishop Petit of Menevia. Amongst the many dignitaries present was a past curate of the Cathedral, Archbishop David Mathew (Apostolic Delegate to Africa). St. David's had risen again from the ashes of the "blitz" - a church worthy of the affection and support of the whole Archdiocese.



Most Rev. Michael McGrath
LL.D., D.D., M.A.
Third Archbishop of Cardiff
1940 - 1961



Most Rev. John A. Murphy
Fourth Archbishop of Cardiff
1961 - 1983

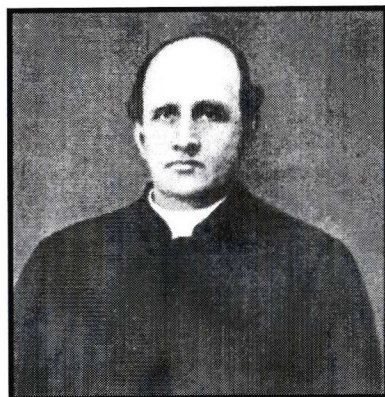


Most Rev. John Aloysius Ward
OFM Cap.
Fifth Archbishop of Cardiff

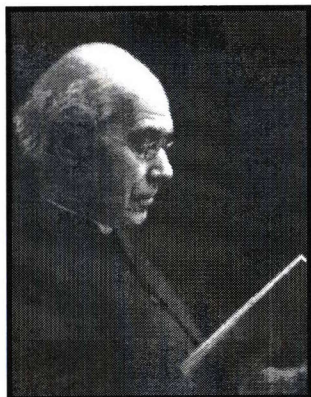


Father Stephen Bruno I.C.
Rector of St. David's
1874 - 1888. Organised a
fund to provide a new church

Monsignor W. Williams
Vicar General, who arranged
for the building of the new
church.
Superior at St. David's
1888 - 1895



Father Alphonsus Van den Heuvel
The first Administrator of
St. David's Cathedral.
He is pictured on the occasion of his
Golden Jubilee of Priesthood
in November 1917



Just two years after the re-opening of his Cathedral, Archbishop Michael McGrath died and in August 1961, Rome announced that his successor was to be Bishop John A. Murphy who had been Bishop of Shrewsbury for twelve years. He came to the Archdiocese with a reputation for being an able Administrator and one whose writing on spiritual matters was interesting, relevant to the age and commanded great respect.

He inherited an Archdiocese that was changing rapidly. The population of his Cathedral parish, which once sustained a school of nearly a thousand pupils, was diminishing. House clearance and the movement of parishioners to estates on the periphery of the city saw a continuing decline which all but wiped out the Catholic congregation in the city centre.

New parishes were set up and, above all, Archbishop Murphy was responsible for the planning and building of new Catholic secondary schools in every part of the Archdiocese. His period of office culminated in the first ever visit of a Pope to Cardiff in 1982. His Holiness Pope John Paul II celebrated Mass in the grounds of Cardiff Castle - part of St. David's parish - and lunched in the Castle whose dungeons once held the Cardiff Martyrs - SS John Lloyd and Philip Evans and some fifty recusants who died there for the "Old Faith."

Archbishop Murphy enjoyed a long and happy retirement dying in November 1995 within a month of his ninetieth birthday.

The Franciscan Order (Greyfriars) has had a very long association with Cardiff. It is generally accepted that they were first established in the Friary to the east of the Castle in 1280. Before the Reformation there were four Franciscan Bishops of Llandaff, Roger Cradock in the 14th Century; John Zouch; John Welles and John Smith - all "Greyfriars" - ruled the Welsh Diocese in the 15th century. During Penal Times, two of the Vicars Apostolic (Bishops) of the Western District, which

**Archbishop
 Murphy
 Succeeds**

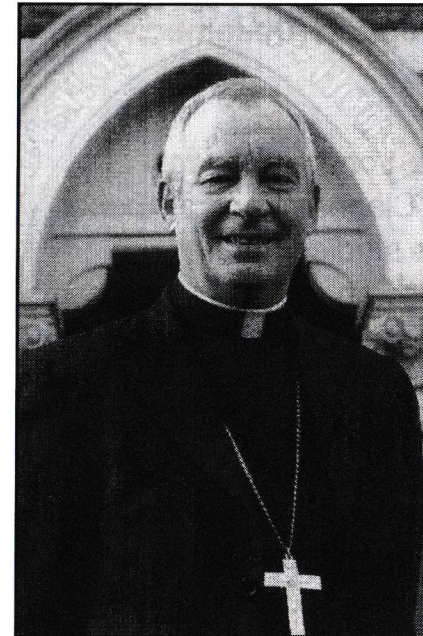
**Archbishop
 John Aloysius
 Ward
 O.F.M.Cap.**

included all of Wales, were members of the Franciscan Order - Matthew Prichard OFM (1715-1750) and Peter Collingridge OFM (1809-1829). It was, therefore, a case of “welcome home” when in 1983 the Pope announced that the next Archbishop of Cardiff was to be the Bishop of Menevia Rt. Rev John Aloysius Ward, a Capuchin Friar who is a native Welshman.

Under his guidance since 1990 the Cathedral has gone through an intensive period of interior refurbishment bringing it up to date with the liturgical reforms that have come in during the past thirty years. Nevertheless it still emanates an air of tranquillity and timelessness amid a bustling and ever changing city centre.

Following a bout of illness and a consultation with the Holy Father, Archbishop Ward retired in 2001. In October of that year it was announced that the then Bishop of East Anglia, Bishop Peter Smith was to be the sixth Archbishop of Cardiff.

Archbishop Peter, a Doctor of Canon Law, was formerly Rector of St. John’s Seminary, Womersley. He was installed at St. David’s Cathedral on 4th December, 2001 as Archbishop of Cardiff and Metropolitan of the Welsh Province.



**Most Rev. Peter Smith
LLB., J.C.D.
Sixth Archbishop of Cardiff**

ADMINISTRATORS OF THE CATHEDRAL

Fr. Alphonsus Van den Heuvel

**Canon Daniel J. Hannon
(Later Bishop of Menevia)**

Canon William Coonan

Monsignor Peter F. Gavin

Monsignor John Crowe

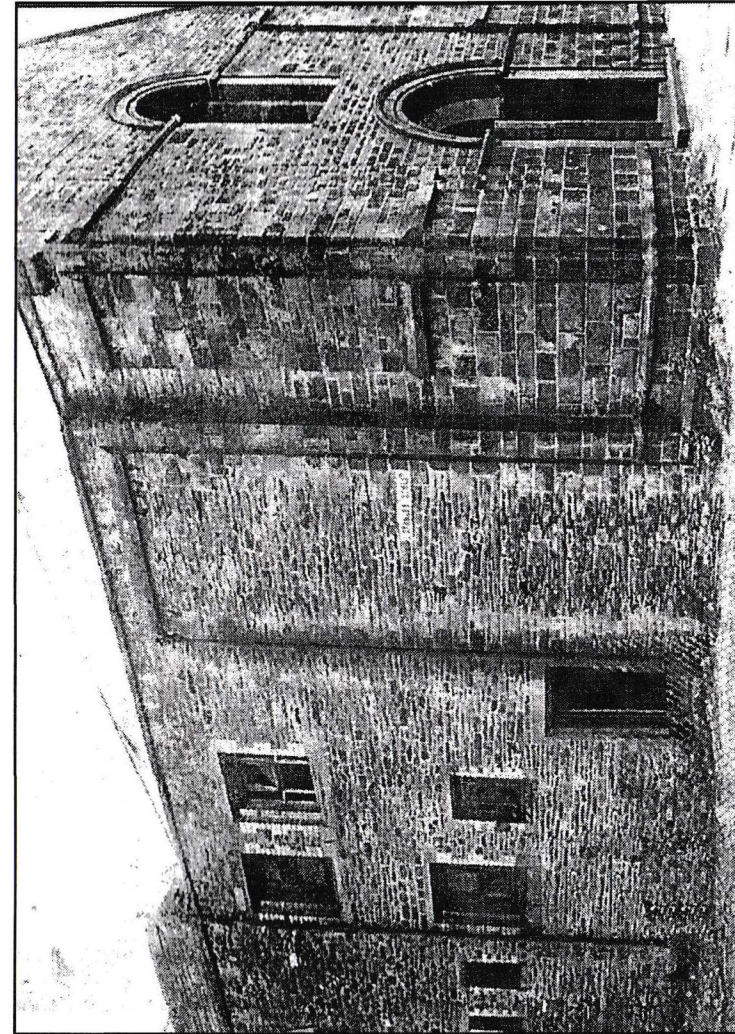
Canon Bernard Cosulich

Fr. William Donovan

**Canon Edwin Regan
(Bishop of Wrexham)**

Fr. Bernard Whitehouse

Fr. Peter Gwilym Collins



**St. David's Church, 1842
Bishop Brown's spacious church of imposing architecture!**

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