

YEARS OF STORM & STRESS

Joseph Matt & Americanism

with a commentary and notes by Paul Likoudis

on Matt's "A Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota"

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From January to August 2012, *The Wanderer* published, and offered commentary, on a remarkable series of 36 articles written by this newspaper's long-serving editor Joseph Matt (1877-1966) in 1950-'51 on Americanism, "the German question," and subjects related to "Cahenslyism," named after the German Catholic layman Peter Paul Cahensly, who devoted himself to the aid of German-Catholic immigrants.

In this series of articles, Joseph Matt told the German-American Catholics' side of the story of what the late Monsignor George Kelly would call the "Battle for the American Church"; i.e. German Catholic opposition to the nascent modernism in Americanism and the Americanist hierarchy's determination to assimilate German Catholics into the American melting pot.

As a sort of prelude to this series, we will enter the field of German-American Catholic historiography with some snips from a paper read by University of Chicago historian Kathleen Neils Conzen at the first Edmund Spevack Memorial Lecture at Harvard University, November 7, 2003, which touches on many of the issues we will see Joseph Matt discussing in that series of 36 articles sixty years ago, as he reflected back on the battles of the of the late 19th and early 20th centuries:

"...Catholicism has long seemed like an embarrassing guest at the table of American historiography," observed Conzen, "best ignored in the hope that it will not make a disturbing fuss. Catholic historians in their marginalized historiographical ghetto were long concerned to prove that Catholics were good, or even better, Americans than everyone else. Mainstream historiography, if it took them at their word, could avoid having to come to terms with an anomalous religious system, escape the political minefield of appearing to blame Catholic victims for differences that led to discrimination, and dismiss America's periodic outbursts of anti-Catholicism as irrational paranoia outside the national mainstream. American democracy, Alexis de Tocqueville famously argued, turned even its Catholic citizens into good republicans, and by their refusal to engage the Catholic issue, American historians implicitly agreed.

“In Europe, too, Catholic historiography was long sealed off from mainstream historiographical concerns, with nineteenth-century Catholicism seemingly little more than a backward-looking footnote in a dominant narrative of modernizing secular progress. But this interpretive situation has undergone a dramatic transformation over the past several decades, as scholars have come to understand both the major revitalization that Catholicism experienced in nineteenth-century Europe, Germany included, and the significance of its corporatist, ultramontane resistance to the emerging liberal state....

“A new Catholic historiography has shown that the new devotional style, and the hierarchical corporatist sense of social order and ultramontane orientation upon which it rested, became pervasive among American Catholics after the 1830s. This helps explain the distinctive Catholic political behavior that analysts have long identified, and helps account for the force of American liberal opposition to Catholicism’s influence, as John McGreevey’s recent study persuasively demonstrates [*Catholicism and American Freedom: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2003)].

“The power of that anti-Catholic opposition itself emerges dramatically in Philip Hamburger’s recent documentation of the central role of anti-Catholicism in the shaping of the American doctrine of the separation of church and state. [*Separation of Church and State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002)] Within this context, then, the German Catholic experience can provide an instructive case of just what was at stake in these nineteenth-century American culture wars....

“[B]y 1870, almost a sixth of all American Catholics belonged to German-speaking parishes, and a third of all American priests were German. A century later, roughly the same proportion of American Catholics still acknowledged German descent. By the end of the nineteenth century, there were more than 2,250 German-language Catholic parishes scattered across the northern United States, from the industrial cities of the northeast through the farming heartland of the Midwest to the Great Plains and the Pacific Northwest, with outliers as far south as Alabama and Texas. Roughly three-quarters of those parishes were concentrated in the five Midwestern archdioceses of Cincinnati, St. Louis, Milwaukee, St. Paul, and Chicago, where German immigration coincided with the opening of the American frontier and where roughly a third of all Catholic parishes were German. The great majority of these German parishes were rural. Fewer than ten percent were in the sixteen large urban areas with six or more German parishes each, though those urban parishes were admittedly the largest ones. When mapped, these German parishes form some fifty separate geographical clusters ranging in size from three, to thirty or forty, contiguous rural and associated urban parishes each.

“Within the archipelago of these clustered colonies, German Catholic immigrants and

their descendants long supported an elaborate institutional structure that paralleled both the secular German-American ethnic array and that of other Catholics. They developed a political culture at odds with that of other German Americans and a religious culture distinctive from that of other Catholics, nurturing a set of conservative, communal values that acquired significant influence within American public life. German Catholics formed a recognizable voting bloc as early as the 1850s, and remained one as late as 1970, when political analyst Kevin Phillips highlighted their role in the emergence of a national Republican majority and the new religious right....

“The distinctiveness and relative endurance of this ethno-religious subculture emerged from the immigrant encounter of a revitalized German Catholicism with an American republic undergoing its own process of religio-cultural redefinition. Four factors, I would like to suggest, played a crucial role in forming the German Catholic subculture: first, the relative success by the mid-1840s of German-American efforts to confessionalize the Catholic migration and retain immigrants within Catholic auspices; second, the diaspora consciousness—the sense of still being part of a larger, German-rooted whole—that was cultivated through continuing ties to homeland Catholicism; third, the practical political obstacles that Germans, along with other Catholics, presented to an America in the throes of evangelical self-redefinition; and fourth, the Kulturkampf mentality and separatist milieu formation that resulted....

“By 1824 there were enough German Catholics in the new western diocese of Cincinnati in Ohio that its Maryland-born bishop, traveling in Europe, sought German-speaking priests to serve them. He recruited first the Hanoverian Frederick Rese, who would become the first bishop of Detroit in 1833, and then two Swiss, Martin Kundig and John Martin Henni, the latter of whom would become Milwaukee’s first bishop in 1844. In Cincinnati beginning in the late 1820s, these immigrant priests and their lay allies effectively invented the basic institutional array that would characterize German Catholicism in America. This included the elaborate institutional parish complete with school, choir, and mutual benefit societies and sodalities for every age and gender group, soon also the German Catholic orphanage, hospital, cemetery, as well as the first German-language Catholic newspaper in the United States in 1837, explicitly aimed at a national rather than purely local readership. It also involved the recruitment of German-speaking religious orders—Austrian Redemptorists in 1832, Swiss Sanguinists in 1843, Bavarian Benedictines in 1844—and the establishment of a German-language seminary in 1846. As early as 1827, Rese published in Germany the first pamphlet explicitly promoting America as a site for Catholic settlement—a new Catholic “Zion,” Henni would call it in an 1836 pamphlet—and at least by the late 1820s, Germany’s infant Catholic press was publishing reports from their coreligionists in America. The Cincinnatians also helped stimulate the formation of societies to support American missions in Vienna in 1827 and Munich in 1838, which sent clergy and money to America and diffused news of American opportunities to a broad Catholic public in

Germany through their published reports.

“Soon each German priest in America became a point of information and practical aid tied into an international emigration network, each parish priest in Germany a potential point of access. Thus as German interest in emigration intensified in the 1830s, Catholic Germany was well on its way to developing what might be termed an emigration system of its own....

“The best evidence for the success of the effort to confessionalize the migration within overtly Catholic channels is the growing elaboration of what has to be understood as a German Catholic settlement system. During the 1830s, German priests like Peter Henry Lemcke in western Pennsylvania and Joseph Ferneding in Indiana sought to follow Gallitzen’s example by drawing scattered Catholics into clustered colonies.

“Lay Catholics in Europe also began to form emigration colonies before leaving Germany, like the Westphalians and Bavarians who settled in Missouri, Eifelers in southern Michigan, and Hanoverians in Ohio. Such colonies, and the *entrepot* cities that fed them, quickly acquired additional settlers directed to them by Catholic authorities to whom newcomers turned for advice, and by articles on new settlements that became a staple of America’s widely circulated German Catholic press. By the late 1840s, Midwestern bishops in Dubuque, Milwaukee, and St. Paul were explicitly luring German Catholic settlers to their dioceses, and the scattered colonies of the earlier period soon gave way to broad bands of rural German Catholic settlement. Proliferating Benedictine monasteries proved particularly potent nodes of these expansive new frontier concentrations. As the second and third American generations came of age and needed additional land, the same process of ever-expanding colonization continued well into the twentieth century. Catholicism, then, was not merely part of the immigrants’ cultural baggage; it was the vessel in which many made their voyage to a new-world life.

“Those who chose to settle under the auspices of the Church were in a sense self-selected by their adherence to its values, which would be reinforced in the clustered settlements through churches, schools, institutions, and social pressure. But—and this is the second factor I want to explore—America’s German Catholicism was never just a simple construct of immigrant memory and American adaptation. It was a true diaspora culture, retaining continuing ties to the Catholic homeland and taking its cues from German rhythms as much as from those of America.

“For one thing, ongoing chain migration and family correspondence kept many personal transatlantic ties alive well into the third decade of the twentieth century and beyond, as relief efforts after both World Wars testify. For another, America’s German Catholic press provided constant, informed, and extensive coverage of events, controversies, and

trends in Catholic Germany, and interpreted American events in their light.

“Even more significant was the direct leadership Catholic Germany long provided. Not until the early twentieth century did German America begin to be self-sufficient in its Catholic clergy. Barely 50 German-speaking priests served the nation’s estimated 300,000 German Catholics in 1843. By 1869, there were a total of 1,169 German-speaking priests in the United States, of whom only 39 were known to be American-born; these German-speaking priests accounted for about 35 percent of all American priests at the time. The heavy clerical immigration at the height of the Prussian *Kulturkampf* helped push the number of German clerics to 2,067 by 1881, though the increase of the American-born proportion to 18 percent also signified a beginning transition to a homegrown clergy. Importantly, the largest single group, 30 percent of the total, came from Westphalian and Hanoverian dioceses, many of them *Kulturkampf* refugees carrying the passions of embattled German Catholicity directly into American pulpits and confessionals. Similarly, while America’s German seminaries began turning out male lay teacher-organists for German Catholic parishes as early as the late 1840s, immigrants trained in Germany as *Kirchenvater* long remained in high demand in American parishes. German sisterhoods, which began arriving in the 1840s, seem to have attracted recruits far more quickly from German America than did the priesthood.

“This long-lasting religious immigration meant that America’s German Catholicism was never purely a folk culture, a set of habits of the heart. It was a consciously imported, cultivated, evolving, and, like its German parent, increasingly ultramontane intellectual and spiritual tradition, accompanied by a set of institutional strategies often derived from homeland example. Certainly Catholic Germans imported a traditional folk repertoire of Baroque piety. The annual parish fund-raising fair became the functional equivalent of the old country Kirmes, votive chapels sprouted along country lanes, and miraculous occurrences ensured occasions for multi-parish pilgrimage to local shrines. Much to the dismay of American bishops, Germans turned tax-supported rural public schools into parish schools on the old country model as soon as they dominated local electorates, and retained German customs of administering parish property through a lay *Kirchenrat* rather than by the pastor alone. But many of the specific devotions, and the proliferation of cradle-to-grave Church-sponsored societies and sodalities, were not so much traditional as products of the nineteenth-century Catholic revival, and it remains unclear how much was American innovation and how much was direct copying of new German trends....

“Certainly Henni himself, when he first took up his editorial pen in 1837, saw the main task of the 'worldly' side of his newspaper to be a double one: defending the Catholic as a model republican citizen, and telling his readers what they needed to know to fulfill the duties of citizenship....But the seeds of the German Catholic quarrel with America were also present in his constant insistence that community must come before self, that

freedom should never be permitted to degenerate into insolence or anarchy, and in the convolutions he went through to justify religiously the enjoyment of alcohol and the convivial German Sunday cherished by his flock.

“There was the nub of the problem. Catholic immigrants were encountering an America in the throes of its own religious revival, a revival that was creating what Mark Noll has termed a new American synthesis compounded of evangelical Protestant religion, republican ideology, and commonsense moral reasoning. Not only did this redefinition of America’s religious identity and the 'extraconstitutional religious establishment' (the term is William Hutchinson’s) that it stimulated leave little room for Catholic Americans, with their very different social and moral conceptions: It also brought direct day-to-day political conflict over issues like temperance, Sabbatarianism, public education, and slavery. Thus by the 1840s, America’s anti-papist British heritage took on sharper political form, not only in revulsion against the growing Irish and German presence, but also in response to real concerns for national salvation and for the problem of maintaining effective self-governance among a culturally heterogeneous citizenry.

“German Catholic voters only too readily equated such efforts with German state pressures on ultramontane Catholicism, and quickly became some of the staunchest members of the Democratic Party’s coalition against the evangelical reform agenda that emerged in the 1850s as the Republican Party. The same localism and anti-statism on which southern slaveholders drew to defend their ‘peculiar institution’ from federal attack seemed the best defense for the autonomy and distinctiveness of German Catholic communities. This political alliance with southern rebels meant that northern German Catholic communities faced acute federal pressure during the Civil War, and that efforts to bring Church schools under public control became a significant component of the Republicans’ postwar Reconstruction agenda....”

Dr. Conzen's full paper can be read at the web site of the Washington, D.C.-based German Historical Institute, here: <http://www.ghi-dc.org/publications/ghipubs/bu/035/35.43.pdf>

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A Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota...

This week's quote of the week comes from installment number 19 from Joseph Matt's 35-week series, “A Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota,” his recollection of the history of German-American Catholics' struggle with the leading Americanists in the hierarchy, especially the Archbishop of St. Paul-Minneapolis, John Ireland.

"The German language has a number of expressive terms to characterize the different

types of distortion of historical facts. The Catholic historian Onno Klopp, one of the outspoken adversaries of Prussianism, coined the word *Geschichtsbaumeister* (architects of history). *Geschichtslugen* (perversions of historical facts) was the title of a book published in the days of the *Kulturkampf* by the brave Catholic journalist Majunke and other 'Lovers of the Truth.' Closely related with these words are *Politische Brunnenvergiftung* (poisoning of the wells for political purposes) and *Konfessionelle Brunnenvergiftung* (poisoning of the wells in the religious sphere).”

To Joseph Matt, and many others, the modernist heresy was a direct spawn of the Americanist heresy, and the efforts of leading Americanists (Cardinal James Gibbons of Baltimore, Ireland in the Twin Cities, and Bishop John Keane of Richmond, who was removed from his position as Rector of the Catholic University of America at the height of the tensions between Rome and the American hierarchy in 1896, “to poison the wells.”

Much of Joseph Matt's recollections of those late 19th century battles focuses on the battle for Catholic education and Catholic parochial schools, for which he was an indefatigable champion, arguing and insisting that Catholic schools were the only credible opposition to the rising Secular State, which aimed at extinguishing the influence of Catholics in public life.

To what extent was he right or wrong? Readers will be able to judge for themselves.

Consider the latest news from Philadelphia – the closing or merging of 48 Catholic schools, the largest single shuttering of Catholic schools at one time in this country – suggests the grandfather of the current publisher was correct in his analysis.

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Some historic background on the raging controversy at the time:

In August 1882, the American Freethinkers held a Convention in Watkins Glen, N.Y., at the Glen Springs Resort (which, in 1949, would become St. Anthony of Padua School, operated by Polish Franciscans from Wisconsin) and passed a set of resolutions “assail[ing] the Church with a bitterness to which the claim of broad-minded liberality gives a particular sting,” reported an account of the proceedings in the *American Catholic Quarterly Review* (Vol. 7, 1882).

“The Church is represented as an organization for the perpetuance of ignorance and bigotry, and the clergy as scheming scoundrels. No attempt is made to define any position. With ostentatious 'liberality,' dubious fraternities of Free lovers, Spiritualists, Agnostics, Deists, and a very significant 'etc.,' are welcomed to the freethinking ranks.

There is the usual glorification of liberty and progress....

“A powerful ally of infidelity in the United States has been the system of public education. This is decidedly godless. In the Divine counsels, the general method for communicating religious truth to mankind has been external. Faith, says St. Paul, comes by hearing. All knowledge of the Creator, even that derivable from the contemplation of creation, is sedulously avoided. Science is taught without any reference to the Maker of heaven and earth. History, instead of being treated as a revelation of Divine Providence, is made a mere recital of historical events, which are presented as though they were simply fortuitous. Stress is chiefly laid upon the importance of getting along in the world, and all education has this merely mediate end for its universal scope....

“The irreligious training begun in public school is completed in the public newspaper, which is, perforce, 'the essence or religious toleration;' that is, the absence of all positive ethical thinking. From the newspaper he learns of the doings of political officials, who are either jocosely complimented on their shrewdness in peculating, or defended for their crimes by an appeal to the greater criminality of their opponents....

“So far as infidelity in the United States has any plan, it seeks, first of all, to destroy faith in the Bible. It knows that whatever religious life there is in non-Catholic America is derived from Scriptural teaching; but it feels instinctively that the Catholic Church is stronger than the Bible. It has no fear of Protestantism, which lacks coherence and contains in itself the principle of its own dissolution.

“The Catholic Church, thoroughly organized and possessed of an invincible life, is peculiarly odious for its calm definition of the limits of human intellect, its indifference to mere material progress, and its championship of the rights and powers of an invisible world. Indeed, its proof of Christianity as a living power in the world, is irresistible.

“How may it be destroyed? Or, since this is impossible, how may its influence in the United States be limited?

“The resolutions point out the line of attack:

“By representing the Church as hostile to our political institutions.

“By organization, the formation of freethinkers' clubs, and the establishment and diffusion of 'liberal' newspapers, tracts and books.

“By controlling education.”

* * *

In a “Memorial” submitted by Archbishop Ireland and Bishop Keane to the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith on December 6, 1886, the Americanists argued: “With a German Church in America, there is no hope for the conversion of American Protestants. This is a vital question for religion. The Church will never be strong in America; she will never be sure of keeping within her fold the descendants of immigrants, Irish as well as others, until she has gained a decided ascendancy among the Americans themselves. Thank God, the times seem favorable for their conversion: prejudices are dissipating: the conservative principles of the Catholic Church recommend her: There is a decided movement toward the Church. To accelerate it the Church naturally must, as far as can be done without danger to other interests, be presented in a form attractive to Americans....”

“The Germans bring with them to America some noble qualities; but they also bring with them certain ideas and methods of action which the Americans fear. The Socialistic movements in the United States generally have Germans at their head; the Germans have little respect for Sunday; extend the German influence over the Church, and the Americans will see a powerful agent in spreading the ideas and manners which they like least in the Germans....”

“It should no longer be necessary,” Ireland and Keane informed the Holy See, “to place in the Episcopate of any ecclesiastical province so many Germans as to cause the belief that the German is a the favored race in the Church, or to lead Americans, Catholics as well as Protestants, to suspect that a foreign element is seeking to prevail in the Church....”

This 1886 document, reflected Joseph Matt in No. 18, Feb. 15, 1951, “is undoubtedly, as to contents and form, one of the strangest manifestations of Catholic thought in modern Church history....[I]t was a fundamental error of the Memorial of December 6, 1886, to demand what amounted to a monopoly for the English language and to relegate to 'imported' languages to a position of mere toleration. This attitude and the injunctions upon non-English immigrants of immediate and absolute self-effacement and adjustment to their new surroundings added up to a denial of natural rights – which was all the more reprehensible because it took place in the sphere of religion. Nor was the injustice lessened by the argument that submission to such wishes and demands would enhance the prestige of the Church and increase the number of conversions, for the end, no matter how desirable, does not justify unjust means.

“But even this argument – that only 'foreign' traits were a scandal to non-Catholics and that they would readily accept the Church once she had acquired an 'American character' – emanated from a nebulous mirage. If this plea had been founded on realities, the conversion en masse so confidently anticipated six decades ago would be an actuality

today when the nationality and language problem in the former sense, generally speaking, no longer exists. But, instead, the Oxnam's, the Blanshards, etc., and strong belligerent organizations are vehemently opposing the Church and denouncing justified demands in the field of education, for instance (school buses, release time for religious instruction, etc.), with the same fanatical intolerance as in the days of Know-nothingism and the American Protective Association.

“Exactly as in the days of open persecution, in the Fifties and Nineties, the attacks are directed at the essence of the Church, her 'rigid dogmas,' the 'enslavement of the conscience' (for instance in matrimonial matters and in regard to the sex fetish), so-called 'political Catholicism,' the alleged 'un-American spirit' of the Church in regard to the principle of separation of Church and State, etc. There is no sign of 'a decided movement toward the Church' and little evidence of sympathy for her 'conservative principles'....The fact is that the Church is not wanted. She is rejected as the adamantean antithesis of Liberalism and Secularism and all the other idols in the temples of Enlightenment....

“The same situation prevailed in 1886 and it was unfortunate that learned men were wrapped up in the idea, or played with the idea, that the Church was endangered from within, by Catholic immigrants, and thought it proper to send their sensational call of alarm to the Apostolic See that 'the American Church....is loudly crying to be saved from German and foreign nationalism' (*Relatio*, p. 31). What they actually had in mind is clearly evidenced in the ideas put forth by them in this and other controversies, – they were perturbed by strong Catholic opposition to the 'Americanist' conformity trends seeking a reconciliation between modern society and the Church.

“The German-American Priests Society (sneeringly called 'the Clerical Union'), the German-American Catholic congresses (*Katholikentage*), the German-American and French-Canadian Catholic press, in those days a powerful factor, repudiated the program of the rising movement of 'Americanism' to 'let down the drawbridges,' thus abandoning vital positions, in order to bring about a reconciliation between modern culture and the Church. They held ideas different from those of modernistic 'Americanism' in regard to school and education, the modern State and its trends towards omnipotence and totalitarianism, and in regard to secret societies and other agencies and propagators of Liberalism and indifferentism in the disguise of tolerance. They not only refused to subscribe to tenets diluting and 'minimizing' Catholic fundamentals for the sake of illusory hopes and dreams, but openly proclaimed their opposition. And we can safely assume that it was mainly for these reasons that the nationality and language question was made an issue of first magnitude, engaging Catholics as well as secular public opinion, in order to eliminate 'foreign' and 'un-American' influences impeding the glorious advance of 'the American Church' to world leadership....”

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A little bit of Catholic school history: Last year, Andy Smarick wrote for the journal *National Affairs* (Spring 2011), an essay, "Can Catholic Schools Be Saved?," following the news that Archbishop Timothy Dolan would be closing a large number of schools in the Archdiocese of New York. Smarick wrote, in part:

"In the first decades of the 19th century, the few Catholic schools that did exist often received public support, typically from local governments. But concerns over government aid to religious institutions, as well as growing anti-immigrant sentiment, brought these arrangements to an end. They also played a part in the emergence of government-funded 'common schools,' the predecessors of today's public-school system. Designed to counter what some saw as objectionable influences — immigration, religious and ethnic diversification, and urbanization — and to provide a standard education to all students, common schools aimed to advance both education and assimilation. They grew rapidly and enrolled significant numbers of the nation's children; consequently, in the decades before the Civil War, there were still only about 200 Catholic schools nationwide.

"But the waves of immigrants that swept to America's shores in the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th would have major implications for American education, particularly Catholic schools. Urban public-school systems, still in their formative years, quickly became overwhelmed by the massive influx of students. In 1881, New York had to refuse admission to nearly 10,000 children because the city lacked classroom space; in Chicago in 1886, had all students reported for school as required, there would have been room for only one-third of them....

"During this era, anti-immigrant bigotry spread and intensified and, in some places, received the government's imprimatur. Nebraska and Hawaii passed legislation restricting schools' ability to teach foreign languages. Illinois and Wisconsin enacted laws banning any education in foreign languages, thus effectively dismantling the states' German Catholic and Lutheran parochial schools. Oregon passed laws requiring students to attend public schools — a direct assault on the right of families, Catholic or otherwise, to educate their children as they saw fit. And at the federal level, former speaker of the House James G. Blaine introduced a constitutional amendment in 1875 that would have strictly forbidden any government funding of schools run by "any religious sect." The Maine congressman's proposal passed overwhelmingly in the House — by a vote of 180 to seven — but was defeated narrowly in the Senate. Within 15 years, however, 29 states had 'Blaine Amendments' in their own constitutions....

"When it reached its zenith in the mid-1960s, the nation's Catholic K-12 education system maintained more than 13,000 schools serving more than 5 million children — approximately 12% of all American students. Most of these schools were in America's cities, and particularly its older cities in the Northeast and Upper Midwest, such as

Boston, Chicago, Detroit, and Pittsburgh. In these areas, Catholic schools represented a huge portion of the primary and secondary education system: For example, in 1960, approximately 360,000 students attended New York City's Catholic schools — 37% of the average daily public-school attendance....

“Today, by and large, the travails of Catholic education still do not register with the public or elected officials. In the first decade of this new century, more than 1,000 Catholic schools were shuttered; 174 Catholic schools closed or were consolidated during the 2009-10 school year alone. In the past ten years, the Archdiocese of Chicago has seen 31% of its students leave; the Archdiocese of New York and the Diocese of Brooklyn have lost 26% and 33% of their students, respectively, in the same period. Indeed, just this January, the New York archdiocese — which serves about 2.5 million Catholics — announced that it would close 27 schools, about one-eighth of its total.”

There are many reasons, as Smarick points out (see: <http://www.nationalaffairs.com/publications/detail/can-catholic-schools-be-saved>) for the demise of Catholic schools since the 1960s, but one reason is left unsaid: the “Americanist” agenda of leading Irish prelates to assimilate Catholics into the mainstream – and of denying justice and natural rights to German-American Catholics who believed that faith was transmitted by language.

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Hilaire Belloc observed in his preface to Hoffman Nickerson's book on *The Inquisition* (Houghton Mifflin, 1923): “Nearly all the historical work worth doing in the English language is the work of shoveling off heaps of rubbish inherited from the immediate past.”

Joseph Matt's “Centenary” is testimony that “heaps of rubbish” still need to be removed from our understanding of what went wrong in the U.S. Church. It didn't start with Vatican II; indeed, it started before Vatican I.

One of the many revelations in Joseph Matt's history is that behind Pope Leo's encyclical on the Americanist heresy, *Testem Benevolentiae* (Feb. 1, 1899) was the “Catholic school question” – which sharply divided Catholics in the United States: prelates, priests, educators and the lay faithful.

With Catholic schools in an ongoing, decades-long decline, it seems opportune to recall that the crisis afflicting Catholic schools now is not some post-Vatican II phenomenon, but goes back to 1890, and has its roots in the Americanist heresy.

Before we look at Joseph Matt's take on the “school question,” let's first look at some of the “rubbish” that passes for intelligent commentary on the Catholic school closings in Philadelphia.

“Blame Vatican II for Philly's Catholic School Closings,” was the headline over popular Philadelphia columnist and television and radio commentator Chris friend, published January 11 in the *The Philly Post*, the blog of *Philadelphia* magazine.

“...In the tumultuous 1960s, the world was on fire as secularism and moral relativism were in vogue. Rather than standing its ground and fighting those undesirable concepts, the Church went in the opposite direction. In effect, Vatican II allowed Catholics to be 'Catholic' in pretty much any way they wanted, playing right into the hands of the Woodstock culture. That carte-blanc decree served as a launching point for the now-dominant 'do whatever you want to do and whatever makes you feel good without remorse' mentality.

“In an instant, the things that made Roman Catholicism the world's dominant force vanished. To many, the 'rock' upon which St. Peter built the Church no longer seemed solid, but more 'flexible.'....

“The Church lost those things when it stopped demanding greatness from its rank and file, instead letting folks off the hook by making things 'easier.' Holy Day of Obligation falls on a Saturday or Monday? You don't have to go to church that day; we'll just make Sunday Mass count for both. Want to wear cut-off shorts, sports jerseys and flip-flops to church? No problem. Fasting from meat on Fridays get in the way of ordering sausage on your pizza? The hell with it. Just do it. We'll eliminate that rule, too.

“The list goes on and on, and the more the Church gave in, the more people stopped going to mass, and yes, the more parents stopped sending their children to Catholic schools. Since the Church took away the essence of Catholic identity – the very point of being a proud Roman Catholic – what was the point of doing either?

“And now, several generations later, the carnage is everywhere.

“Mosques are full, as are many evangelical churches, and the Catholic churches are empty....”

This is all very superficial stuff.

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In Part IV of his “Centenary,” Joseph Matt wrote of the intra-Church struggle to prevent the secularization of Catholic parochial schools; his retelling of the story, however, recalls the secularization of Catholic colleges in the 1960s with the Land O' Lakes statement, which was, essentially, the fulfillment of the Americanists' vision for

secularizing parochial schools.

“...In the foreground of the great Church controversies in America toward the close of the past [19th] century was the school question, i.e. the question whether the parochial school was a necessity and whether or not it should be continued and further expanded and developed. There were many parishes in which precious little was done to execute or bring to fulfillment the decrees of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore – which imposed the obligation on all parishes to erect and maintain parish schools if at all possible.

“In fact, many parishes could be cited that were opposed in principle to such schools. Among them was the parish headed by the Rev. David Phelan of the *Western Watchman* of St. Louis, one of the most vociferous protagonists of 'Americanism' in all all of its various forms. Nor is the history of the St. Paul Archdiocese lacking in unedifying instances of this sort. Indeed, Catholic opposition toward Catholic schools was an incredible manifestation, what with the clear-cut lessons of the centuries-old Masonic campaign against the Christian schools, the incisive directives of the Church and the decrees of the Third Plenary Council, and in view of the unyielding struggle that had been waged for many decades by bishops and other leading champions of Catholic education (among them Orestes Brownson, James A. MacMaster and, without exception, the German-American, French-American and other newspapers and periodicals.)

“Characteristic of the then-prevailing situation was the notorious pamphlet, *Education – To Whom Does It Belong?*, by Professor [Thomas] Bouquillon, of the Catholic University of America, and the resultant controversy.

“The question put in the title of this pamphlet was answered by Bouquillon by ascribing to the State a role superior to that of the Church in matters of education. To this Fr. R.O. Holaind, S.J., replied with a brochure reminding the University professor, among other things, of the essential difference between mere education and character formation, and, basing his arguments on the declaration of Pope Leo (particularly his encyclical *Sapientiae Christianae* of January 10, 1890), showed clearly and indisputably that parents have a natural and prior right to educate their offspring and that, in the case of Catholic parents, they do so under the guidance of the Church. But Archbishop Ireland, in a public newspaper interview, rejected Fr. Holaind's thesis as 'obsolete and un-American viewpoints.' 'The world,' he declared, 'is progressing while Fr. Holaind reminds behind....I entreat the American people to accept these opinions solely as deriving from Fr. Holaind, not from the Catholic Church.' (Tardivel, *La Situation Religieuse aux Etats-Unis*, Montreal, 1900).

“At the time, the conflict revolving about the Faribault Plan was in full swing. This plan, similar to an earlier attempt (Poughkeepsie, N.Y.), to amalgamate the parochial and the

public school, had not been conceived by Archbishop Ireland but had originated in one of the Faribault parishes; a less renowned instance was that of Stillwater. In each of these two [Minnesota] towns there were three parish schools. The schools belonging to the German and French parishes had fewer pupils than the two whose pastors who agreed to the secularization of their schools. And the leasing of the parish schools signified precisely that: secularization!

“Following the proposal of Fr. Conway, who found a ready imitator in Stillwater, the school and its equipment were leased to the local School Board for a nominal sum of \$1.00 a year under a contract obligating the State to pay the school Sisters for their services. Almost immediately, however, the State Superintendent of Schools, D.L. Kiehle, announced that there could be no thought of taking over a *sectarian* school, that the School Board could not commit itself to the hiring of a teaching faculty composed exclusively of religious teaching Sisters. He let it be known, moreover, that in a tax-supported public school system religious instruction would not, of course, be permitted, and that the teaching Sisters, in case of public resentment or opposition, would have to exchange their religious garb for ordinary civilian apparel in order to conduct class.

“Thus both schools were completely secularized. Classroom prayers were discontinued, religious pictures disappeared, religious instruction could only be given outside of the regular school curriculum – twice a week for a half-hour period each time. It was fortunate that the plan never was fully realized and that it was eventually quietly dropped.

“But there were those who dreamed and insistently strove to use it as a norm and, if possible, introduce it throughout the land. That the instigators were less concerned with remedying an obvious injustice – the double burden imposed upon the parents of Catholic school children – than they were with perpetuating dyed-in-the-wool Liberalistic ideas was clearly evidenced by Fr. Conway, among others.

“According to daily newspaper reports, Fr. Conway bluntly asserted that he had transformed his parish school into a public school 'so that the children who attend this school would receive the advantages of an American education in the best sense of that term and would be able to prepare themselves for the discharge of their obligations as American citizens'!

“Even in the non-Catholic camp people were amazed at the Catholics' apparent about-face on the school question. A reporter from the Minneapolis *Journal* went to see Archbishop Ireland. 'Apparently the reporter expected to find the Archbishop incensed against the Faribault pastor. Instead, Archbishop Ireland calmly told him: 'I endorse what Fr. Conway has done.'

“The secular, Masonic and irreligious press applauded noisily. For example, the *Washington Post* of Sept. 26, 1891, lauded 'this new proof of genuine Americanism' on the part of the St. Paul prelate....In October of that year Bishop McGolrick of Duluth asserted in a New York press interview: 'Faribault? That is an excellent idea, one which is destined, I believe, to find acceptance throughout the United States. The time of quarreling over religious difference of opinion is past. We want to be one people only, speak only one language, be a united, absolutely American people'....”

Just how big this crisis was for the U.S. Church is that the Holy See intervened twice. First, the Sacred Congregation for Propaganda (predecessor of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) issued a document dated April 21, 1892, *Tolerati Potest*, which declared that the Faribault/Stillwater arrangement could be “tolerated.” Then, on May 3, 1892, that same congregation sent a letter to each member of the U.S. Catholic hierarchy, reminding bishops that they were obligated to follow the decrees of the Third Plenary of Baltimore, which required that each parish establish and maintain a parish elementary school. “That was again confirmed in a letter by Pope Leo XIII to the Bishops of the New York province on May 27, 1892,” wrote Matt, who continued:

“The Faribault Plan....constitutes one of the high points in the controversy which anteceded the general conflict about 'Americanism'....”

* * *

Just how big the "school question" was at the time can be judged by a Sept. 29, 1892 report in the *New York Times*, on the gathering of some 5,000-6,000 German Catholics in Newark, N.J. for the German Catholic Congress.

“...In regard to the public schools,” the *Times* reported, “the resolutions say that the German Catholics of the United States are the submissive children of the Holy Father, and that they hold exactly the views which the Holy See has always held in regard to the education of Catholic children. The resolutions denounce the public schools in unmeasured terms. 'These schools without religion,' they say, 'are abominable in their very nature.’

“Here is an interesting bit of reading for Archbishop Ireland and his liberal allies: 'We denounce all efforts at coquetting with the State schools as dangerous and inopportune, in view of the undoubtedly materialistic tendency of such State schools. We regret that such efforts have been made by Catholic prelates. We heartily commend and uphold the outspoken declarations of most Catholic bishops against the attempts to interfere with our parochial schools.....'”

Among the speakers at the conference was a Rev. Mr. Heinen [Fr. William Heinen, of

Sts. Peter & Paul Church, Lehighton, Pa.] of East Mauch Chunk, Pa., who said, in part, according to the *Times* article cited above (the *Times* printed his full speech, to indicate how dangerous German-American Catholics were): “....It is nothing less than a tyranny, which I cannot but call barbarous, for the State to claim the right of educating the children or the right to compel the parents to send their children to certain schools. It is tyranny of the most oppressive character to compel the parents to pay for schools to which they cannot send their children.

“The end of the State power will be Socialism. If we are to have the State exercise such power, the sooner we become Socialists, the more sensible and logical will be our action. If the State claims such prerogatives, why, then, the State may some day, like Emperor Nero, command that worship be paid to a horse....”

Is it unfair to say that Fr. Heinen was wrong about *that*?

* * *

Joseph Matt's “Centenary” opens with his republishing, in English, his fair-minded, beautifully-written obituary of Archbishop Ireland, who died in 1918. Although they had sharp differences on a host of issues, Ireland and Joseph Matt had mutual respect and affection for each other, as this passage from Part III indicates:

“*The Wanderer* felt impelled more than once during the years of storm and stress to pursue a different course than that of Archbishop Ireland. But the late Archbishop, broadminded and real democrat that he was, would never permit this. Even for mistakes which the writer of this obituary, in his younger and more impulsive years, had made, Archbishop Ireland was graciously lenient, and several times he tendered warm recognition to our paper. 'I am quite willing,' he wrote in one of his first letters to the editor, 'to say that *The Wanderer* is doing a great deal of good work by its staunch defense of Catholic principles....' And later, when the big controversies had run their course, the editor was often encouraged and fortified by correspondence from the Archbishop. In one of these – we received it on our Saint's day in 1910 – he wrote: 'It will give me great pleasure to see you whenever you do me the favor of calling on me, and to talk with you about the interests of religion in the Northwest....'

“But mindful of an old adage impressed on him in his youth, 'Never go to your superior unless you are called,' the writer seldom made use of these and similar invitations,” Matt continued, “though the hours we were privileged to spend with the venerable cosmopolitan prelate belong to the happiest remembrances of our life; and every time we took leave of him we did so with the feeling that we had been in the presence of a great man, a noble man, a *Sakularmensch*, a man who combined within himself an extraordinary degree of strength and mildness, indomitable spirit and impeccable piety,

urbanity, and deep love for the Church, a man who had few real equals in the land....”

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For the past month or more, there has been a brouhaha in New Jersey on whether or not the “father of editorial cartoonists,” Thomas Nast – famous (or infamous) for his anti-Catholic cartoons, should be honored with a place in New Jersey's Hall of Fame

Writing in Newark's *Star-Ledger*, January 22, guest columnist Tom Deignan reminded readers that Nast's anti-Catholic bigotry was hardly out of the “mainstream” of the time.

Indeed, “Nast was just one of many celebrated Americans who exhibited blatantly anti-Catholic views. The truly shocking thing about Nast's negative depictions of Catholics, as well as Irish immigrants, is how un-shocking they were for their time.

“Nast was just one anti-papist in a long line of Americans that includes the Founding Fathers and presidents, Supreme Court justices and celebrated inventors....

“To this day, the internet is filled with conspiracy theorists who believe that fiendish Jesuits were behind the assassination of Abraham Lincoln in 1865. The 1870s saw Catholics and Protestants literally killing each other on streets of American cities in competing St. Patrick's Day parades. Then, in the 1890s, 'anti-Catholicism surged,' according to *The Irish Way*, a forthcoming book by University of Illinois professor James Barrett....

“Thomas Nast may or may not be a deserving member because of his anti-Catholic views. What we can say with certainty about Nast is that his views were hardly uncommon,” wrote Deignan.

Agreed: it was in this nearly half-century-long toxic social and political environment that Joseph Matt found himself battling for the rights of the Catholic Church, even if it meant opposing such leading “Americanists” as his own Archbishop, John Ireland, and the the U.S. Church's leading figure, James Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore.

Before resuming with Joseph Matt's series on “A Centenary of Catholic Life in America,” a word on the Nast controversy.

In 2006, Notre Dame University Press published Justin Nordstrom's *Danger on the Doorstep: Anti-Catholicism And American Print Culture in the Progressive Era*, which reminds us that, as anti-Catholic cartoonists go, Nast was by far the milder of the bunch, and his reach and influence was likely far less than many of those who were far more vicious than he.

“One of the most striking aspects of Progressive-Era anti-Catholic literature,” wrote Nordstrom in the introduction, “repeated on an almost weekly basis, is its condemnation of Catholic historical figures (whom the Church praised as patriotic role models) and the denunciation of Catholic charitable work, which anti-Catholics dismissed as merely a front for child slavery. ‘Sham’ charity and insincere patriotism, asserted Catholic opponents, siphoned money out of the public treasury and into papal coffers and, worse yet, duped Americans into believing that Romanists were a benign, even beneficial force in daily life. Not coincidentally, the intense outburst of anti-Catholic hostility that emerged in the 1910s coincided with Catholics’ earliest concerted attempts to assert and demonstrate full membership in American society—a process that continued unevenly through the late twentieth century.

“Denying and denouncing Catholics’ overt claims to national belonging became one of the primary goals of anti-papal writers in the early twentieth century, a task they carried out with an intensity that would have been unnecessary and irrelevant in previous manifestations of American anti-Catholicism. Because they argued that Catholic historical figures had helped secure America’s progress in the past and that selfless charity allowed Catholic lay and clerical workers to contribute to its well-being in the present, Catholics were viewed as infringing on what their opponents considered critical ideological territory....

“With an eye toward elaborating on this historiography by examining an under-studied episode of anti-Catholic radicalism, this book presents a textual and historical criticism of ten anti-Catholic newspapers active from 1910 to 1919, all of which articulated nearly identical portrayals of the Roman Catholic Church and its membership. Wary that the Church had become more numerous, attained more political power, and above all had begun to establish itself as a prominent, respectable, and contributing aspect of American social life during the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, each of these anti-Catholic papers condemned the Church as hurtful and destructive to American civilization itself. These papers exhibited significant differences in longevity, duration of their anti-Catholic focus, and circulation. The smallest anti-Catholic printing enterprises had a parochial and limited circulation, reaching less than two thousand nearby subscribers, while more successful anti-Catholic sheets boasted national circulations in the hundreds of thousands, vastly exceeding mainstream newspapers more familiar to historians of the Progressive Era. By 1915, the most successful anti-Catholic newspaper of this decade, aptly named *The Menace*, boasted over 1.6 million weekly readers, a

circulation three times greater than the largest daily papers in Chicago and New York City combined....

“This Progressive-Era emphasis on uncovering destructive secrets and uprooting corruption was conveyed throughout anti-Catholic columns and in the publications’ titles themselves. Newspapers with names such as *The Peril*, *The Crusader*, *The Liberator*, and *The Menace* conjured images of anti-Catholic writers and editors as heroic defenders against sinister enemies....

“The mastheads and headlines of these papers—blaring messages such as 'Roman Catholicism, the Deadliest Menace to Our Liberties and Our Civilization,' 'Cry for Help from Convent Walls,' 'Rome’s Inquisition at Work Again,' 'Roman Catholic Designs on the American Nation,' and 'Military Maneuvers Start' reveal significant fears by early twentieth-century writers that America was under attack—literally and figuratively—from Catholic forces, a claim that seems paranoid and pushes the envelope of credibility for contemporary readers....But as large circulation figures demonstrate, these claims also found credence with an American public relying on the power of information to make sense of a changing world around them and willing to extend America’s legacy of anti-Catholic hostility well into the twentieth century....

“In fact, while anti-Catholic publishers expressed proudly that their papers were well received by Protestant ministers throughout the nation, the rhetoric of anti-Catholic xenophobia was meant to appeal to readers as concerned citizens and patriotic Americans—not dyed-in-the-wool Protestants....”

* * *

Joseph Matt opened Part II of “A Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota” (October 19, 1950), with this autobiographical note:

“When I came to St. Paul as a young journalist in 1897, the Archdiocese was approaching the end of the first half-century of its history. Only a few of the old pioneer priests were still living. Besides Msgr. Ravoux, I was best acquainted with Fr. Alexander Berhold, whom Fr. Pierz had brought to America, together with a dozen other students from Austria, among them F.X. Katzer, who died as Archbishop of Milwaukee.

“Many of the excellent priests, both regular and secular, who in the 1870's and 1880's began to play a role in the religious and cultural life of the Northwest were close friends of mine. I knew most of the Ordinaries of the various dioceses of the St. Paul province, and *The Wanderer* archives contain many an interesting letter, particularly from Bishop James Trobec of St. Cloud and Bishop John Stariha of Lead, S.D. [later, Rapid City, *FTM*]. On a number of occasions I shared the speakers rostrum with one of these early

bishops.

“Among the many splendid bishops in those days Archbishop John Ireland was the most outstanding. In the first few hours after his demise I wrote a lengthy obituary which appeared in *The Wanderer* the following day (September 26, 1918) and which Fr. Hudson, in those days the doyen of Catholic editors, pointed out in *Ave Maria* (Notre Dame, Ind.), as the best evaluation of this great man....”

In his obituary of Ireland, which Matt presented to readers of *The Wanderer* for the first time in English (*Der Wanderer* did not begin its English edition until January 1931), he observed:

“To understand his extraordinary influence, one needs only to recall with what veneration the older generation of Catholics and non-Catholics alike looked up to him. He was the focal point of religious life in Minnesota. And it was this, in addition to his actual achievements, that had such a dynamic and fruitful effect on the religious life of the State and which raised up the Church, in those days still suffering under the intolerant spirit of Knownothingism, from out of the depths of calumny and set to nought from the outset the work of their successor, the Apaists (American Protective Association, founded in Clinton, Iowa, in 1887].

“All their accusations and recriminations, that a Catholic cannot be a patriotic citizen, that he lacks understanding for American institutions and has no real love for American freedoms, all these accusations were countered by the living example of Archbishop Ireland. People believed him, trusted him and supported his undertakings in a spirit of genuine toleration. His colonization projects were readily fostered and supported by big capital; his efforts to promote tolerance and, in fact, total abstinence, met with a wide response not only from Catholics, but even more so from non-Catholics; his word carried weight in questions of public life, even in political questions; whenever questions pertaining to education, culture and the public welfare were threshed out, Archbishop Ireland played a prominent role. People enjoyed listening to him, enjoyed being led by him, and no name throughout America was mentioned quite as frequently as his. He was the typical American citizen and patriot.

“And all this helped a great deal to build up the external framework of this diocese; the history of the founding of the flourishing St. Paul Seminary, the history of St. Thomas College and other institutions, and the history of the Cathedral, that glorious monument of his endeavors – all testify to his genius. And yet it was well there were others who stood beside him, who labored and worked with him, with the world knowing a great deal about them, who cultivated the little things which the world deems valueless and passes by, who concentrated on the development of the spiritual life amidst the growing superficiality and secularization of the time, who knew from history that the Church

never looms really great in the resplendent rays of the great ones of this world, be they powerful potentates seated on magnificent thrones, or uncrowned rulers, or, the worst of all tyrants, public opinion.

“It was well that there were such unsung heroes in the land who true to their mission labored and worked unseen and far removed from the broad highways! Because there were times that came for the Church in America which boded no good and, had it not been for the obscure workers in the Lord's vineyard, might have had far graver consequences than they actually had....

“And great indeed was Archbishop Ireland. He towers above the history of our times. It would be a disservice to such a man to chant shallow encomiums at his bier and to ignore completely his mistakes. Indeed, it would be an injustice to the man, for the fact is that his real greatness becomes manifest when the humble dignity of truly great souls he does not hesitate to admit mistakes and errors of judgment and to repair and correct them with redoubled zeal.

“Shallow newspaper scribblers have named him a Richelieu and thought wonders what they had added to his glory. But a Richelieu in their sense is nothing great at all. On the contrary, a great man – really great that is – a man possessed of great strength of soul, is he who will say to himself in the autumn of his life that he has often sought the right thing on the wrong road, and then, heedless of the world's judgment, unconcerned with the enmity of those who once acclaimed him, and disdainful of the triumphs he once savored over his opponents, proceeds humbly along the way and spends himself wholeheartedly in built up those things that were neglected or postponed in times of storm and stress. And that is why the errors and mistakes of this great man must not be passed over in silence at his grave. For they are part of the history of the storm and stress period of the Church in America, and in the center of this period stood John Ireland, Archbishop of St. Paul.

“We are referring to the controversies that took place in the 'eighties and 'nineties inside the Church in America, when ardent spirits, fired with new visions and dreams that swept the young Republic stormed eagerly ahead and with youthful disregard for everything that had gone before, everything traditional and historic, sought to put in its place something grandiosely new, something unique and unprecedented, something never before achieved in any other land.

“The controversies centered in the first place on a life and death struggle for the parochial schools, and Faribault and Stillwater are landmarks attesting to the fact that the continued existence of the parochial schools hung only by the tiniest thread when the momentous papal decision *Tolerati potest* finally called to a halt an extremely dangerous movement. Hand in hand with these controversies was the conflict with regard to the

continuation of so-called national parishes, particularly the German-speaking parishes which were the chief protagonists of the parochial schools. It was a time of misunderstandings and – as far as the small-caliber propagandists and camp followers of those days are concerned – a time of subjective as well as objective calumny when all forces were mobilized against the Catholics of German ancestry and under the battle-cry of 'Catholicism' prejudices were aroused and fostered among their non-Catholic compatriots which still partly exist to this day....

“These controversies and their concomitants did not proceed from questions of mere expediency, but had to do with principles rooted in the natural law and in the Church's doctrines and traditions. They represent, besides other tendencies of those days, the opening stages of that growing spirit which, unwittingly fraternizing with the errors of the time, sought to bring about a change in traditional attitudes with regard to the relationship between the Church and State in society, the limits of government authority and power, and the nature of a national Church. It was inevitable under the circumstances that these tendencies would ultimately involve the direct as well as the indirect repudiation of Catholic principles. It was at this period that the conflicts reached their climax. It was the heyday of 'Americanism,' the 'Americanism that sang a stormy cradle song for the Catholic University, that needlessly squandered finest energies, that cast its deep shadows upon the breadth of Catholic life, until, finally, when Pope Leo XIII rendered his decision in *Testem Benevolentiae* of February 1, 1899, the best that could be said of the conflict was that it had vainly dissipated valuable time and energies which might have been employed for better causes....”

Next week, as we continue with Joseph Matt's “Centenary,” we will see how inter-Church disputes among honorable Catholic gentlemen were blown out of all proportion and exploited by the secular press to discredit “pro-papal” Catholics.

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When Joseph Matt arrived in St. Paul to assume the editorship of the German-language newspaper *Der Wanderer*, he was barely 20 years old, had been in the United States for only three years, had graduated from Canisius College in Buffalo, and his vigorous style of journalism led to jobs at German-language newspaper in Buffalo and Pittsburgh, where he was working when he came to the attention of *Der Wanderer's* editor Hugo Klapproth, who hired him in 1897. Joseph Matt remained editor of *The Wanderer* – whose English edition he launched in January 1931 – until 1964.

When he arrived in St. Paul, the Archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis was not yet ten years old, though the Diocese of St. Paul had been established in 1850, carved out of the dioceses of Dubuque and Milwaukee.

As a young immigrant, Joseph Matt knew some of the pioneer priests of the archdiocese, as he recalled in the first of his “Centenary” series. Among those was Fr. Augustine Ravoux, who came to the region in 1844. In the following years, as editor of *Der Wanderer*, Joseph Matt, as readers will see, was in correspondence with many of the leading prelates and priests and Catholic journalists, on both sides of the Atlantic as the Americanist controversy raged.

Of Fr. Ravoux, Matt presented this charming vignette:

“...The successor of Fr. Lucien Galtier [who built the first chapel in the Twin Cities area, dedicated to St. Paul, from which the city derives its name] was the splendid pioneer priest Augustine Ravoux, who came here in 1844.

“A tireless shepherd of souls, Fr. Ravoux visited the settlements at St. Paul, Mendota, Little Canada, Wabasha and many other places, and became the apostle and friend of whites and halfbreeds and Indians throughout the Northwest. In his memoirs he tells of many interesting experiences – among others his peace negotiations between the warring Chippewa and Sioux who in 1842 fought a bloody battle in the village of Petit Corbeau, *connu matenant sous le nom de Kaposia et West St. Paul* – 'known today (1876) as Kaposia and West St. Paul,'

“Of particular instance is his detailed account of how and Fr. M. Sommereisen instructed and finally, in response to their request, baptized thirty-three out of thirty-eight Sioux Indians who had been condemned to death in Mankato (1862) for the frightful massacre in which they had participated in New Ulm.

“The narration, including a description of his dangerous pastoral journeys up the Mississippi and his long cross-country treks to Fort Pierre on the Missouri, reads like a priceless document carried over from ancient days or like those gem-like communications received ever and anon from zealous missionaries in far-off desert places.

“And yet, Fr. Ravoux is not gone long. We can well remember, from our days as a journalist, many an inspiring discussion we had with him in the former rectory of the old Cathedral – where the Hamm building is situated today – and remember, too, the many times when we met him on the street and stopped for a friendly chat with the venerable old man who, even in his declining years, had retained that militant spirit which is characteristic of the lectures he wrote a century ago 'in answer to different attacks by atheists, infidels, Protestants and bad Catholics.'

“Fr. Ravoux repeatedly held the office of Administrator for the infant diocese. The first bishop was the Most Rev. Joseph Cretin, after whom Cretin High School has been

named. He had been Vicar General in Dubuque, and was appointed Bishop of St. Paul on July 23, 1850. He was consecrated on January 26, 1851 in Belley, France, and on July 2 of that year arrived in St. Paul. It was under his administration that a two-story combination structure, consisting of a church, school and bishop's residence, was erected on the corner of Wabasha and Sixth Streets. Fr. Ravoux, who was a pastor in Mendota at the time, relates that whenever Bishop Cretin wished to see him, he hoisted a flag on the Cathedral roof as a signal for him to come....

“At the time of his [Bishop Cretin's] death in 1857, the Catholic population had risen, largely because of Irish and German immigration, to some 50,000 persons, with twenty priests administering to their needs....”

That would be one priest for every 2500 Catholics – and a large territory for those priests to cover!

* * *

In Part IV of his “Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota,” Matt wrote of his early involvement in the Americanist controversy, and the need for him to record bits of that involvement, even if time never would allow him to give a full accounting:

“Heinrich Hansjakob, who in his younger years was twice imprisoned because of his forthright attitude during the *Kulturkampf* of Baden and who, as pastor of St. Martin in Freiburg, became a very popular writer, says in the foreword to the reminiscences of his youth (1879): 'In my opinion even the life of the most simple soul deserves to be written and published. The trials and struggles of even the obscurist person, if put into writing, would be a valuable contribution to the history of religion and human culture.'

“Mindful of these words by Hansjakob, we used to jot down all sorts of odd impressions and experiences we had as a young journalist and even kept kind of a daily journal. But in subsequent years the heats and burdens of the day forced us to abandon this as well as other plans and dreams, so that a comprehensive narrative of our personal experiences, such as we have been repeatedly asked to write, will in all likelihood never materialize.

“And yet, many things do accumulate in the course of more than a half-century of journalistic effort, things that are worthwhile writing about even if they be only hastily jotted down in newspaper articles, and things which will be of no interest at least for some even in an age accustomed to treat all history and tradition rather shabbily. We may assume this in all modesty, since it is not so much our own activities of which we speak, but rather our observations of events which, though insufficiently known or distorted by bias and misinterpretation on the part of the present generation, were once the focal point of heated controversy and inspired debate.

“And here we may speak with a certain degree of authority, since we were personally acquainted and, in fact, corresponded with many of the men who stood in the midst of these controversies, and are one of the few surviving Catholic journalists who actually participated in these struggles, and least in the final phases of storm and stress. It was the centenary observance of the St. Paul Archdiocese that suggested these reminiscences. But although introduced with an historical sketch of the Church province and an evaluation of Archbishop Ireland, this series of articles is obviously not intended as a scientific dissertation on the entire complex of questions that were involved, but will merely highlight some the historical developments in skeletal fashion.

* * * [In original]

“It was in August 1896, that I first came in contact with the seething controversies that disturbed many people throughout the land and that began to arouse interest even on foreign shores. Thanks to my mentor, the well-known Catholic poet and editor Wilhelm Keilmann (whose 'Columbus Cantata' in 1892 received the first prize in the outstanding Columbus observance of that year) [and noted German-American editor in Evansville and later Indianapolis], and the famed Jesuit missionary priest Fr. M. Port, among others, I had been informed on the basic points of the Faribault school controversy and of the heated controversies at the Catholic University in Washington which centered on the most part of what was finally condemned (1899) by Pope Leo XIII in his breve on 'Americanism.' But prior to that, in August 1896, I was visiting in the parish rectory of Dr. A Heiter in Buffalo [Fr. Anton Heiter, who supervised the construction of Seven Dolors (St. Mary of Sorrows) Church, one of East Side Buffalo's most magnificent churches, now the Martin Luther King Cultural Center. The church's opening and dedication in 1891 coincided with the gathering of some 10,000 German Catholics, eight bishops and 300 priests for a meeting of the Catholic Central Union, i.e. Central Verein, of which Fr. Heiter was a national leader], the author of several controversial treatises on the school question, etc., and became personally acquainted with the distinguished prelate Dr. Joseph Schroeder.

“Monsignor Schroeder, whom I met for the last time in 1900 in Muenster, where he shared his ideal scholar's retreat with the celebrated Dr. Franz Hitze, belonged to the original faculty of the Catholic University together with his colleague professors Joseph Pohle, Abbe Peries, and others. It may be that Msgr. Schroeder was a less renowned scholar than the famed Breslau dogmatist Joseph Pohle (whose principal work was adapted into English by Arthur Preuss). But he undoubtedly surpassed most of the professors of his time, particularly people of [Fr. Thomas] Bouquillon's caliber. Pohle and Peries soon left Washington, however.

“Schroeder, a more militant character, held out until he was forced to retreat in 1897.

But even before leaving America he was appointed professor at the theological-philosophical academy in Muenster and became the rector of that outstanding institution after its restoration as a full-fledged university in 1902....The appointment of Dr. Schroeder to the important Strassburg post....proves at any rate that Dr. Schroeder was better appreciated in Germany and Rome than he was in Washington!"

* * *

In *The Vatican and the Americanist Crisis: Denis J. O'Connell, American Agent in Rome, 1885-1903* (Universita Gregoriana Editrice, Rome, 1974), Fr. Gerald P. Fogarty, SJ, detailed what we might call "The First Battle For The American Church," which raged for more than ten years – years Joseph Matt described as the years of “stress and storm.”

Fr. O'Connell was the rector of the North American College, and a fervent Americanist who, in many ways, stoked the Americanist controversy on behalf of his patrons, Cardinal James Gibbons, Archbishop John Ireland and Bishop John Keane, the rector of CUA who was pulled from his job by Pope Leo XIII during a long battle between Rome and the American Church over "liberalism" at CUA. This, though, was only one skirmish, at a time when Rome was trying to establish diplomatic relations with the United States, and the growing “social question” around labor and capital, the parochial school issue and, of course, “the German question.”

“...[Papal legate Francesco] Satolli had probably befriended Schroeder and perhaps George Peries, professor of canon law, while living at the Catholic University,” wrote Fogarty. “These two professors caused Keane and the liberals no little anxiety until finally there were dismissed from the university only to turn up in Europe as enemies of Americanism. But even if he had not met Schroeder or Peries, it is likely that Satolli would have joined the conservatives....”

“Because of his activities in favor of the programs of Ireland, Gibbons and Keane, O'Connell had mustered against him a powerful alliance of enemies both in America, where Archbishop [Michael] Corrigan [of New York] led the united forces of German-American and conservative Catholics, and in Rome, where Propaganda and the Jesuits worked tirelessly for the conservative party. O'Connell's position was extremely vulnerable for he was the only leader of the liberal party who was not a bishop. As the conservatives grew in strength, they attacked the weak points in the liberal lines. O'Connell was their first victim....”

“In May 1895 Gibbons arrived in Rome to make an unsuccessful plea for toleration of several secret societies. He learned at the time that the Vatican had demanded O'Connell's resignation as rector. On June 7, O'Connell tendered his resignation to

Gibbons to take effect on October 1....

“On September 15, 1896, Leo XIII demanded Keane's resignation as rector of the Catholic University. Named titular Archbishop of Damascus, Keane took up residence in the Canadian College in Rome in December....”

Fr. O'Connell emerges from Fr. Fogarty's book as the most articulate ambassador of Americanism. He insisted,” wrote Fogarty, that Americanism “involved 'no conflict with either Catholic faith or morals,' that it was 'no new form of heresy or liberalism or separatism,' but rather it was 'nothing else than that loyal devotion that Catholics in America bear to the principles on which their government is founded, and their conscientious conviction that these principles afford Catholics favorable opportunities for promoting the glory of God, the growth of the Church, and the salvation of souls in America.’”

O'Connell was effusive in his praise of Americanism, as this May 24, 1898 letter to Archbishop Ireland illustrates:

"Again it seems to me that above all nations, moving them on along the path of civilization to better and higher & happier modes of existence is the constant action of a tender divine Providence, and that the convergent action of all great power, is toward that common & destined end:-- to more brotherhood, to more kindness, to more mutual respect for every man, to more practical and living recognition of the rule of God. At one time one nation in the world, now another took the lead, but now it seems to be that the old governments of Europe will lead no more, and that neither Italy nor Spain will ever furnish the principles of the civilization of the future. Now God passes the banner to the hands of America, to bear it, in the cause of humanity, and it is your office to make its destiny known to America and become its grand chaplain. Over all America there is certainly a duty higher than the interest of individual states or even the National government. The duty to Humanity is certainly a real duty and America cannot certainly, with honor, or fortune, evade its great share in it. Go to America and say: thus saith the Lord. Then you will live in history as God's Apostle in modern times to Church & to Society. Hence I am a partisan of the Anglo-American alliance. Together they are invincible, and they will impose a new civilization. Now is your opportunity, and at the end of the [Spanish American] war, as the Vatican always goes after strong men you will likewise become again her intermediary.”

O'Connell's long letter, observed Fr. Fogarty, “was more than a paean to Americanism. It expressed a long-standing conviction, deriving from the Cahensly dispute and the school question, that before Rome would take the American Church seriously, the United States would have to gain universal recognition as a world power. The final battle for Americanism, however, was to be fought, not in France as O'Connell had originally

thought, but in Rome,....”

And in that battle, Joseph Matt and *Der Wanderer* were principal protagonists, as his “Centenary” illustrates.

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To put into clearer context Joseph Matt's “Centenary of the Church in Minnesota,” let us take notice now of how the secular press at the time reported on some of the heated controversies in the American Church.

To start, here is a *New York Times* report from September 20, 1891, on the dedication of Seven Dolors Church (St. Mary of Sorrows) in Buffalo, built under the direction of Fr. Anton Heiter who, as we saw last week, was one of Joseph Matt's mentors.

Dated Buffalo, under the headline “A German Catholic Church Dedicated in Buffalo In The Presence of Thousands,” the dispatch reads:

“An astonishing revelation of German solidarity and strength of numbers was furnished here today. Apparently it was arranged as a fitting forerunner of the great congress of German-American Catholics which begins proceedings tomorrow. The announcement had been made that a new Catholic church was to be dedicated, but little or nothing appeared beforehand to indicate an affair of magnitude or novel significance.

“The edifice to be dedicated was that of a distinctively German-American parish, the Church of the Seven Dolors. It is a stone structure, reminding the beholder of a medieval fortress. Around the church, forming a flashing circle of polished steel, stood an imposing array of dark-uniformed Catholic Knights, with drawn swords at present arms. Up and down the streets, hemmed in by crowds of eager spectators, could be seen rank after rank of bright tinsel-sashed sodalities bearing aloft banners inscribed with gilded letters, chiefly in Latin or German. The Right Rev. Bishop Ryan, the administrator of the diocese, slowly paced the circuit of the church's exterior, blessing the stones to the service of the Almighty. This task ended, he disappeared.

“Within the church, into which thousands poured, there appeared as celebrant of the Mass this time a German-American prelate, the Right Rev. Bishop Zardetti of St. Cloud, Minn., and the immense mass of people bowed and knelt, while perfumed clouds from golden censers obscured the scarlet background of the altar, and the high-vaulted arches trilled with the alleluias of the German choir. Father Van Rossum, one of the Faculty in the great German-American Canisius College, a few squares distant, spoke with great earnestness. The theme of his discourse was the sacredness of the Church of God and

what was connected therewith.

"Meanwhile, thousands waited as patiently as statues. The most solemn moment of the ceremonial, the elevation of the Host, was announced to them in a startling manner, a heavy cannonading being substituted for the usual tinkle of a bell.

"Much curiosity is expressed as to the number of German-American Bishops who will attend the meeting of the German Union, and thus supposedly avow themselves in opposition to their fellow-prelates. The promoters of the congress count upon the presence of six to eight wearers of the purple and 300 or more priests, besides estimating that 10,000 strangers in Buffalo tomorrow night will witness a torchlight parade of another 10,000 uniformed lay adherents of the clerical union, or Priester Verein, the conclave of which is to be the center of interest."

* * *

"Much curiosity is expressed as to the number of German-American Bishops who will attend the meeting of the German Union, and thus supposedly avow themselves in opposition to their fellow-prelates." That line from the *Times'* report barely indicates "the storm and stress" of those days a hundred-plus years ago that Joseph Matt commented upon in his recollections of the "battle for the American Church" that raged throughout the last decade of the 19th century and the first few decades of the 20th century.

Consider, for example, this report from *The Providence Journal*, October 8, 1896, "Bishop Keane's Removal," with the subhead: "Gossip on the Removal in Washington -- The Conflicting Interests of the Schroeder and Caldwell Factions in the University -- Bishop Keane's Retirement Ends the Struggle Between the Liberal and the Clerical Elements in the Church."

Three differently datelined stories appeared under the headline: the first from St. Paul, on Archbishop Ireland's statement on Keane's removal; the second from Peoria, on Keane's likely successor, Bishop John Spalding of Peoria, one of the co-founders of CUA; the third from Washington, from which this excerpt:

"The practical removal of Bishop Keane from the rectorship of the Washington University here has for the moment displaced all political gossip. In spite of the amicable correspondence between the rector and the Pope, it is very evident that Bishop Keane has been removed against his will, and his refusal to accept the honors which are offered him by the Pope indicates that he will not entirely surrender. The statement of Archbishop Ireland of St. Paul that the Board of Directors at the university at their forthcoming meeting may promptly re-elect Bishop Keane to the rectorship has created

almost a sensation, because it would indicate an unwillingness on the part of the American clergy to acquiesce in the direct order of the Papal authority.

"Bishop Keane's removal ends the fight that has been waged in America for some years between the liberals and the clerical, or Jesuit, element of the Church. Of the liberals, Archbishop Ireland of St. Paul is the foremost representative, and Bishop Keane has always been his ardent supporter. Archbishop Ireland's stand on the matter of the State school funds and the parish schools of the West is well known, and is heartily supported by the vast body of the Americans. It will be remembered, too, that Senator Davis of Minnesota took occasion one day to discuss this matter in the United States Senate, and his endorsement of Archbishop Ireland's liberal and American policy won the commendation of the entire press of this country.

“At the head of the clericals stands Mgr. Schroeder, one of the foremost professors of the university. He is the ideal ecclesiastical diplomat, a man of magnificent presence, polished, of attractive manners, speaking the various modern languages with equal ease. From the day he arrived in this country he has been gradually extending his influence and power until the party which he represents has in Bishop Keane's removal achieved at least a temporary triumph. While there has never been open friction between the rector and Mgr. Schroeder, there have been frequent occasions of differences of opinion so strong that it is marvelous that nothing ever became public of their opposing views. Bishop Keane some time ago carried the liberality of his views to the degree of inviting several Protestant professors to deliver lectures at the university.

"A powerful support of the clericals is among the German Roman Catholics, both in this country and abroad. With the past few days Mgr. Schroeder has been able to announce that the German Roman Catholics of this country have raised a magnificent amount for the endowment of a chair for German philosophy and literature at the university, and to the influence of the Germans abroad is ascribed to the power which has enabled Mgr. Schroeder to have Bishop Keane removed.”

Schroeder, as pointed out last week, was a friend of Joseph Matt's, and was eventually removed from CUA after Keane's resignation. As for Senator Davis, Matt described him in Part 2 of his “Centenary” as “a typical prototype of our present-day super patriots! – who could accuse the German Catholics of national political aspirations which, according to him, are more dangerous than the so-called 'yellow peril.'”

* * *

Looking back at the controversies of the day, especially as they involved “Cahenslyism,” Matt said the era of the 1890s “was a time of misunderstandings and – as far as the small-caliber propagandists and camp followers of those days were mobilized against

the Catholics of German ancestry and under the battle-cry of 'Cahenslyism' – prejudices were aroused and fostered among their non-Catholic compatriots which still partly exist to this day.”

To brand a Catholic a “Cahenslyite” in those days is akin to calling an American who opposes the Imperium's wars today a “jihadist,” or a “supporter of terrorism.”

Indeed, the animosity stoked by such papers as the *New York Times* against the so-called “Cahenslyites,” is illustrated by its coverage of several controversies that erupted in the Archdiocese of Newark when Bishop Winand Wigger was either suing or being sued by his priests over issues related to “Cahenslyism.”

Winand Michael Wigger (December 9, 1841-January 5, 1901) served as bishop from 1881 to 1901. After serving as New York Archbishop Michael Corrigan's auxiliary, he was appointed to Newark. At the time of his consecration as a bishop, according to his Wikipedia profile, there were 121 priests, 83 churches, 18,396 students enrolled in diocesan schools, and 145,000 Catholics in the diocese; by the time of his death nearly twenty years later, there were 256 priests, 153 churches, 34,817 students and 300,000 Catholics.....

“A central figure in the Cahensly controversy, he also insisted on German parishes, with their own schools, and the preservation of German culture....He even threatened excommunication against Catholic parents who sent their children to non-Catholic schools, and unsuccessfully attempted to introduce state legislation to secure the state's support for Catholic schools....”

One of many *New York Times'* reports on "Cahenslyism" and related issues appeared under the headline, "Bishop Wigger's Wrath" with two subheads: “Fruit of the Newark Cahenslyite Congress” and “An Effort to Have Priests of the Diocese Commit Themselves Toward Their Ecclesiastical Head Resented -- Father Corrigan's Letters Working.”

This November 17, 1892 report read, in part: “I order all of you to leave this hall at once! Leave the Hall! Do you hear?”

“This was the way in which the venerable Bishop Wigger of Newark, according to the story of one present, adjourned a conference of the priests of the diocese today. The priests adjourned so precipitously that attention was attracted to them in the street.

“It was an abrupt ending of what is reported to have been a tumultuous gathering. It may prove to be the climax of the discordant strife which has existed for some time in the diocese between the Irish priests and their German fellow-clergymen.

“This strife took tangible and emphatic shape immediately after the Congress of German Catholic Societies in this city. The present condition of affairs, which is a source of much regret to many Catholics, was brought about by the Rev. Father Patrick Corrigan's attacks on Bishop Wigger for his alleged tendency to favor the Germans....

“The conference was secret, but it seems to have been conducted with less decorum than usually governs ecclesiastical bodies.

“It should be said that the Bishop has refused to answer Father Corrigan's specific charges, although he has repeatedly dismissed the subject with a remark that Father Corrigan was a crank....

“It is now thought that Bishop Wigger will suspend Father Corrigan, in which case Archbishop Satolli, representative of the Pope to the Archbishop's Conference in New York, will be asked to intercede and make an investigation of the diocese.

"The letters of Father Corrigan, which are the subject matter of the dispute, are very pointedly written. The reason of the insinuations in the letters is that the Baltimore Plenary Council decided that a priest guilty of attacking his Bishop in a newspaper would be liable to suspension. The first letter of Father Corrigan applied to the German Catholic Congress held in Newark, Sept. 26, 27 and 28. It read:

“It is the spirit of the American people to admit of great freedom of speech and to tolerate, for a time, the discussion of the very wildest theories on political, social and religious subjects. The Anarchist, the free-lover, the religious and the anti-religious man has his say. This freedom of discussion exposes the weakness of false theories and begets contempt for them. These visionaries are mostly Europeans, who were not permitted to ventilate their notions in their native land.

“The patience and toleration of America often succeed in leading these misguided men to see their own folly and to bless the land whose Government and social and religious life they had come to reform, if not, indeed, to destroy....

“The country is indeed very forbearing and the Church most patient, but treason to the Church and State should not escape with impunity. The Priestverein has no *raison d'etre* in the United States. It is not, however, a merely religious organization: it is a political-religious body, and has a foreign politician at its head, Mr. Cahensly. Some German-American Bishops encourage it as a means of advancing more German interests by retaining control of the youth through the German language. These men must understand we have no *Kulturkampf* here, and that the American Church does not authorize them to instigate one....

"Archbishop Ireland prudently refused permission to hold a convention in his city a few years ago. It is a pity that Archbishop Corrigan did not act in like manner, or at least abstain from addressing their meeting with approving words....The prelates that favor a compromise or a modus vivendi with the public schools represent the true sentiments of the American Church. All priests of long experience with the parochial schools favor it....'

“In his second letter, Father Corrigan indorses the ideas of Cardinal Gibbons and Archbishop Ireland relative to the school question. These prelates' position was condemned by the German Congress....”

A month later (December 15, 1892), the *Times* reported on Bishop Wigger's lawsuit against Corrigan, and Fr. Corrigan's lawyers' claims that he could not get a fair trial in the Diocese of Newark. Neither Corrigan nor Bishop Wigger would comment on the upcoming trial in the press, but Fr. Corrigan did authorize a spokesman to give the following statement to the *Times*:

“...If I am to be punished for pointing out the evils of Cahenslyism and for criticizing the men who are more or less guilty of Cahenslyism, then the criminal diocesan curias and some higher tribunals will have to be appealed to in order to punish those who have committed the same offense of which I am accused.

“Archbishop Ireland said but recently that Cahenslyism is impudence. 'It is,' he said, 'simply unpardonable, and all American Catholics will treasure up the affront for future action. We acknowledge the Pope of Rome as our chieftain in spiritual matters, and we are glad to receive direction form him. But men in Germany or Switzerland or Ireland must mind their own business, and be still as to ours. Nor is this the most irritating fact in this movement. The inspiration of the work in Europe comes, the dispatches tell us, from a clique in American. For the last five or six years there has been a determined effort on the part of certain foreign-born Catholics in America, priests and laymen, to obtain the control of Catholic matters in America.'....”

As we will see next week, according to Joseph Matt, Archbishop Ireland had a dramatic change of mind on the “impudence” of so-called Cahenslyism.

###

One of the reasons Joseph Matt published his “Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota” in 1950 and 1951 was to set the record straight on Archbishop John Ireland, the chief figure among the “Americanists” in the U.S. hierarchy, along with James Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore and the major controversies of the time, in which he was often a

key player.

In the third part of this 150,000-word “Centenary” (October 26, 1950), Matt continued with the obituary he penned for *Der Wanderer* (September 26, 1918) on Ireland.

“One of Archbishop Ireland's biographers,” wrote Matt, “who knew him well wrote of the deceased: 'A man of grandiose views, filled with love for all those freedoms denoted by American citizenship, the Archbishop stands for every cause and every ideal that makes a nation great....His education in France gave him an exceptional insight in the controversies that ensued when French formalism undertook to attack new manifestations that were decried as “Americanism,” in obvious ignorance of the fact that in all times and among all peoples there existed an idealistic school of Catholic thought...'

“No one, of course, who had followed the late Archbishop's endeavors, could have had any doubt that he was motivated by high ideals, and that the things in which he failed had been undertaken because of his passionate love for his Church and his country. He found, when he stepped into the arena of public life, that the Church in America was misunderstood, suspected, pushed aside: He wished to secure for her the position to which she is entitled. He understood the prevailing weaknesses and shortcoming of the American people which hamper and impeded their sound development and stunt their spiritual growth: He wanted to free them from these bonds by endeavoring to instill into them that spirit that makes man really free, the spirit that conquers the world.

“For these reasons he strove for conciliation between the spirit of the Church and the spirit of the world, and, mindful of the depressing spectacle of spiritual turpitude in France, he sought new paths, and, carried away by an ebullient optimism, lost sight of the lines of demarcation which eternally separate the spirit of Christ from the spirit of the world. In his efforts to strengthen the Church's influence and prestige he was more successful than most – thanks to his magnetic personality and the high qualities of intellect and character. In his attempt to build bridges between religion and the modern spirit, he failed, had to fail, the same as everyone before him who had attempted a similar rapprochement and who aimed at more than a shallow compromise which is neither fish nor fowl.

“Who then would want to quarrel with him, or hold him in lesser esteem? Indeed, it is easy for anyone who serenely follows a well-trodden and ancient course and who observes from a safe valley below a daring mountain climber above – it is easy for him in the valley to find fault with the intrepid explorer for losing his footing on a towering crag!

“And just such an explorer was Archbishop Ireland, a man who in many respects was

ahead his age, as many of his speeches and discourses testify. What he achieved, for this we want to thank him. What he tried to achieve, this too we want to acknowledge and revere in our memory. And where he failed, this also we want to acknowledge for the motives that inspired him and because of the greatness which he manifested, particularly when he admitted his error and saw some of his most prized ideals fall from their pedestals.

“His last years were spent in quiet, peaceful endeavor. Only rarely did he appear in the public limelight. His concern now was for the parochial school, whose importance and necessity, contrary to his former viewpoints, he freely acknowledged and elaborated upon in inspired pastoral letters and countless sermons; his concern was for institutions of higher learning (for which he had always been an enthusiast); for his Seminary, which he watched over like a father; for the education of the Catholic people in the truths of the faith which, with characteristic kindness and edifying zeal, he knew how to explain as few others could; for the Catholic press, and, in short, his concern was solely and exclusively for his flock.

“We of course do not wish to intimate that he had been negligent in his pastoral duties before. But whereas in earlier years his efforts had centered more in the public arena and interest in questions of public life had absorbed a considerable part of his time, he now devoted himself exclusively to his flock and it seems as if his every breath was intended solely to serve them. And in that role he will continue to live in the memories of American Catholics: Indeed, as 'Archbishop Ireland' he will be remembered with veneration and love long after 'Citizen John Ireland' – as he was once termed by a journalist in those days of heated encounter – will have been obliterated from the minds of the people.

* * *

“The changed situation also helped clarify what had remained of misunderstanding between Archbishop Ireland and his people of German descent. Our societies and organizations, whom he had sharply criticized on more than one occasion in former days, had no warmer friend than him, and wherever an opportunity presented itself he generously acknowledged their willing cooperation.

“Three years ago, on the occasion of the Central Verein's 60th annual convention (1915), he expressed special recognition and admiration for their work. And as for retaining the use of the German language and the cultural traditions and character of the immigrants, he once expressed himself to us somewhat along these lines in a private conversation: 'The immigrants owe it to America to give the best of their heritage and, for the sake of their progeny as well as the general welfare, preserve whatever is good in their tradition and transmit it to their children and children's children. When I visit an Irish parish and

begin to speak of St. Patrick and of all the fine things of the old homeland and find no echo in the hearts of my listeners, fail to see their eyes light up, – then I know that something is wrong in this parish.

“And when I visit a German parish, and speak of St. Boniface, von Ketteler, Windthorst and other great champions and see that my listeners are familiar with the history of their race and, despite their love for the new land of their adoption, still treasure the memory of their old homeland, – then I know that things are in good order in this parish. I hope I never see the day when it no longer will be necessary to speak German in parishes of my diocese, because no one will want to hear a German sermon any longer. For in that case many things will be less satisfying than in days gone by.’

“We can vouch for the truth of this statement, at least its substance. Moreover, the late Archbishop expressed himself along similar lines more than once, also publicly. And had it not been for the fact that illness seized him over a year ago, an illness from which he never recovered, then indeed he would have risen to the defense of the German-speaking elements of his diocese when the boundless campaign against everything German was set in motion. An any rate, we know for certain that in the first days of his illness he was seriously preoccupied with the idea of issuing a public declaration in this regard.”

* * *

In Part VII of the “Centenary” (November 30, 1950), Joseph Matt set the background of the Cahensly controversy.

“In the apse of the Cathedral of St. Paul, along the ambulatory separated from the sanctuary by a beautiful grille, there is, in impressive grandeur, a row of chapels dedicated to the patron saints of the main nationalities represented in the Archdiocese of St. Paul. Archbishop Ireland, the founder of this magnificent building, was particularly interested in this part of the plan, to some extent an adaptation of a similar arrangement in the celebrated basilica at Loreto, and the author of these articles cherishes as a pleasant memory the privilege of presenting in behalf of the Wanderer Printing Company the first contribution to the fund for the establishment of the chapel to St. Boniface.

“The letters exchanged on that occasion and published at the wish of Archbishop Ireland, as well as a private communication of a personal nature which the writer received at the same time, expressed sentiments of complete agreement on the significance and purpose of these chapels as monuments of gratitude to the pioneers who laid the foundation of the Church in the Northwest and brought about its flourishing condition.

“In an address three years ago in the St. Paul Auditorium on the occasion of Cardinal von Preysing's [Archbishop of Berlin] visit to St. Paul, the writer spoke of these chapels their history and symbolism, alluding to former conflicts which, after all, were bound to occur at a time when many thousands of immigrants from every land were suddenly thrown together in totally new surroundings, each group speaking a different language, each endowed with varying natural traits and having passed through historical and traditional experiences and development peculiarly their own.

“Nevertheless, whilst their kinsmen in Europe continued along the accustomed paths of historical quarrels and centuries-old strife, until, finally, without exception, they became victims of these 'hereditary enmities,' here in America, in spite of occasional frictions, a gradual rapprochement of the different nationalities took place, and friendly rivalries and the exchange of talents and achievements predominant in various forms in each national group were conducive to the welfare of all. The chapels in the apse of St. Paul's Cathedral, surrounding like palatines the sanctuary and the Holy Eucharist, attest impressively to the harmonious spirit and cooperative effort of all the nationalities which, in spite of many a tiff, were united not only in erecting the imposing structure of granite and marble on the crest of Summit Hill, but in helping to build God's Kingdom in the Northwest.

“The success of these concerted activities, although undoubtedly hampered at times, was not frustrated by the tempest of bitter quarrels which even in our days re-echo through books and brochures and sometimes shock and worry people who are not sufficiently informed as to the connections and interrelations of such events nor the motives of the men active in certain movements.

“Included among the stacks of material before me at this moment are, for instance, personal letters of Peter Paul Cahensly, – the very man who, in the opinion of the superficially informed, was one of the precursors of Hitler and other dangerous plotters and conspirators against American unity and democracy. Upon the name of this man – one among a number of villainous characters cast in sensational dramas by misinformed, gullible, ignorant or downright dishonest writers – harrowing tales of plotting and conniving are heaped to this day, although even the short reference to this unselfish Christian gentleman in the Catholic Encyclopedia (under 'Immigration') should warn fair-minded persons against some of the worst untruths still making the rounds in pseudo-scientific publications.

“The case of Cahensly and Cahenslyism is a typical example of the deplorable injustices marring the glorious history of the Catholic Church in America. To suppress historical facts and conceal and distort the truth is not consonant with Catholic principles. Fairness and justice toward the past and to those who honestly fought for opinions and convictions demand that things and deeds be reported *sine ira et studio*, according to

Tacitus the prerequisite of impartial presentation.

“There were several phases to the controversies among the different nationalities within the Church. It seems that the last controversy of greater importance was the one culminating in a manifesto submitted by Polish priests and laymen forty-six years ago. But this had hardly any bearing on conditions in Minnesota.

“The most incisive nationality conflict within the Church in the United States revolved about what was called 'the German Question.' The name seems to have originated in a seventy-four page memorial of December 6, 1886, dealing with certain petitions submitted to the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide by Fr. P.M. Abbelen, with the approbation of Archbishop M. Heiss of Milwaukee, in October of that year. The memorial, vehemently criticizing and rejecting the Milwaukee petition, was signed by 'John Ireland, Bishop of St. Paul, and John I. Keane, Bishop of Richmond.' It was published under the title, *Relatio de Questione Germanica in Statibus Foederatis....* and brought forth a veritable deluge of newspaper articles in the Catholic as well as the secular press, and also brochures many of which we have in our files.

“The rise of the conflict of nationalities and languages was in large measure the result of the strenuous endeavors – referred to in preceding articles – of Archbishop Ireland and other outstanding leaders in the last decades of the nineteenth century to lead the Church out of the ghetto of the 'steerage and immigration' period and free it from the stigma of being a 'foreign' institution which, so it was asserted, exposed it to American prejudices.

“These arguments, however, the same as those counseling a less determined Catholic attitude in the field of education and also in regard to secret societies, etc., emanated in their basic concepts from that system of thought and action which at its culmination at the end of the century, under the collective appellation of 'Americanism,' was condemned in the breve, *Testem Benevolentiae*, of Pope Leo XIII. There were, of course, actual problems (to be discussed later) which brought the controversy to a head, but they were of a secondary nature and should have been settled as a Catholic family affair without the interference of a Secularist public opinion. Looking at the race question today, particularly the Negro problem neglected for generations, one can only contemplate with deep regret the vast amount of negative efforts wasted in bygone days on a question which in the natural course of events would have resolved itself without the injuries incidental to controversy and strife.

“It is only fair to admit, however, that in retrospect most of us were unable to gauge the difficulties which, even assuming the noblest intentions on all sides, resulted from the immigration of many thousands of people and their integration into the political and social structures of the country and into a well-ordered parish life. Even in the complete absence of one-sided tendencies and with the patient and forbearing cooperation of all

who were involved in the problems actively or passively, inadequacies and tensions would have been unavoidable. Viewing the achievements of the past against the background of the actual problems, no one can deny gratitude and admiration to the generations of the 'steering and immigration' period – neither to the rank and file of lay people nor their excellent priests and a long line of truly apostolic bishops....”

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In Part VIII of his “Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota,” Joseph Matt set the background of “the German Question” with a description of the vibrant German-American Catholic intellectual life of the late 19th century, with numerous references to German intellectuals in his old homeland who led an amazing revival of the Catholic Church in Germany.

Here is Part VIII, published December 7, 1950:

“For those who urged the acceleration of the amalgamation process, 'the German Question' had been a source of worry long before it developed into an open conflict. The immigration from the German countries, which had assumed considerable proportions in the 'thirties and 'forties, began to grow apace in the middle of the century and, only interrupted at times by historic events on either side of the Atlantic, increased continually.

“The thousands of immigrants arriving every year were drawn to the American shore not only by the hope of improving their lot economically, but also, more and more, because of discontent with political conditions in Europe, particularly as far as Catholics were concerned, with the persecution of the Church in the new German Empire in Bismarck's *Kulturkampf* and parallel developments in several of the Federated States as well as in Austria, dominated by Liberalism up to the rise of Lueger's and Vogelsang's Christian-Social movement and in Switzerland where Radicalism severely hampered the Church, and at times even in Luxemburg.

“The Irish Catholics of the country held a unique position among all the immigrants. Speaking, although with a brogue, the language of the country and being by nature more pliable than most other Europeans they, as far as they belonged to the more recent immigration, found it less difficult to adapt themselves to the new environment. They, too, and in fact more than any other nation, had gone through persecution but, precisely because freedom had been completely denied to them, had not the direct personal experience of the immigrants from the European Continent in dealing with overbearing

governments. For our Irish brethren American liberty meant deliverance from British oppression which continued, even after the Emancipation, as a hereditary 'right,' and the leading position they attained on American soil almost automatically, together with their inherent optimism, gave their patriotism an ardor which was lacking in their German, French, Slavic, etc., coreligionists.

“The members of these nationalities, too, gratefully acknowledged the priceless position of the liberty their new fatherland bestowed upon them. But they had learned their lesson in the active participation in the bitter struggle with Secularist States. They were familiar with the Enlightenment. Liberalism, and the erosive poison of Masonry, and, on the strength of historic developments in Europe and their personal experiences, they were convinced that in America, too, ideological conflicts would ensue. They insistently pointed, not only to the lessons of Know-nothingism but particularly to the attempts to restrict and abrogate the principles of freedom in the field of education, as initial phases of those conflicts. They likewise, because of European experiences, were perturbed by jingoistic world power tendencies which subsequently made their debut in the Spanish-American war with its disquieting religious concomitant, the expulsion of the 'landlord Orders' in the Philippines.

“Furthermore, German-American Catholics were in the vanguard of those Americans who warned against exaggerated confidence in a democracy whose origin and history (in spite of some superficial resemblances to Bellarmine) are not devoid of serious deficiencies and had found such an eloquent (and admired) doctrinaire eulogist in Tocqueville that the profound Frenchman Le Plais says of his book, *La Democratie en Amerique*, that since Rousseau's *Du Contrat Social* no other book had done more harm.

“Free from one-sided admiration, German-American Catholics urged a thorough-going social reform at a time when spokesmen of the Catholic University indulged in ridiculous proclamations to the effect that there was 'no Social Question in America.' They rejected the *Nachtwaechterstaat*, which, according to the tenets of Liberalism, has merely the function to provide external security. But just as decidedly they rejected State omnipotence – which in our day has arrived at totalitarianism.

“The attitude of German-American Catholics was no less pronounced in the field of religious thought. In considering and evaluating this attitude we must keep in mind that the last decades of the nineteenth century were one of the most glorious epochs in the history of German Catholicism. In the political field, the German Centre Party in the struggle for the rights and the liberty of the Church, according to a statement of Pius IX, had become a 'spectacle to the world, and angels and to men' (Cor.1:4,9), and the names of Windthorst, the Reichenspergers, v. Mallinekrodt Schorlemer-Alst, etc., will forever remain among the first in the line of Catholic statesmen. And in all fields of Catholic endeavor, a remarkable harvest has been brought forth by the great men – Goerres;

Ketteler; Moehler; the great reformers of seminary education, Johann Michael Sailer and Georg Michael Wittman; Alban Stolz; Franz Hettinger; Franz Moufang, as well as other illustrious men. Catholic science was represented by scholars of format: Johannes Janssen, Ludwig Pastor, Cardinal Hergenroether, Alexander Baumgartner, the Peschs, Fr. Wiess, Erich Wasmann, etc., etc., and Catholics were also represented in the fields of arts, belles-lettres, etc.

“This Catholic activity in German lands was, of course, a great incentive to German-American Catholic life and was paralleled, though naturally on a more modest scale, in efforts of astounding efficiency and, in some fields, never since surpassed in spite of superior advantages. An enviable position has been attained by the Central Verein, founded in 1855, and by its allied organizations, the German Catholic Young Men's Society, incorporated in 1890. The German American Priesterverein (Priests Society), founded in 1887, conducted an annual *Katholikentage*, took an active part in the conventions of the Central Verein and was the founder of the Leo House (for immigrants) established in New York to commemorate the golden sacerdotal jubilee of Pope Leo XIII.

“An organization that was a pioneer in the field of Church music reform and might be said to have been a precursor of the Liturgical Movement in America, was the American Caecilien-Verein, founded in 1873, which published the *Caecilia* and arranged, besides its annual gatherings, courses attended by priests and laymen from all parts of the country. Among its leading men were noted composers: John Singenberger, Fr. Tappert, Fr. Bonvin, etc. Other organizations were St. Raphael's Verein, for the protection of Catholic immigrants; St. Joseph's Verein, for the support of poor native missions; various confraternities, etc. There was also a German-American (Men's) Teachers Verein, and for a number of years, even a Catholic German-American Press Verein: L. Blankemeier of St. Louis was its secretary.

“The standing and influence of the German Catholic press compared well with present-day conditions although (or because) the mystery of making of the Catholic press a profitable 'business' enterprise and the advantages of mass production and monopolies in that field had not yet been discovered. There were four German Catholic dailies: *Amerika* in St. Louis, *Volksfreund* in Buffalo, *Beobachter* in Pittsburgh, *Volksblatt* in Philadelphia, besides dailies in Milwaukee, Detroit and Cincinnati owned and edited by Catholics. There were twenty-five German Catholic weeklies, some of them having a very large circulation and local editions in other cities. Leading among the monthlies were *Pastoral-Blatt* (for priests) in St. Louis and the splendid family magazine *Sendbote* (Messenger of the Sacred Heart) in Cincinnati.

“A host of outstanding editors staffed this press. The convert Dr. Eduard Preuss, later his son Arthur Preuss (and from 1905 to 1921, F.P. Kenkel) of the *Amerika*; Wilhelm

Keilmann of the *Tagliche Volksfreund*; J.M.A. Schultheis of the *Columbia* and later of the *Excelsior*; Dr. Anton Heiter and F.X. Schifferli of the *Christliche Woche*; the convert Christian Wieckmann of the *Aurora*, the convert Hugo Klapproth of *The Wanderer*; Msgr Jos. Jessing of the *Ohio-Waisenfreund*; Bruno Ritter of the *Stimme der Wahrheit*; Eduard Neuhaus of the *Glaubensbote*; Nch. Gonner Sr. of the *Katholischer Westen* (then *Iowa*); Fr. Wilhelm Faerber of the *Pastoral-Blatt*, etc.

“There were numerous editorial contributors of these papers, many of them well-known. Bishop Zardetti of St. Cloud and other bishops and prelates and secular priests and Religious frequently wrote for them and thus continued the tradition of the founders of the *Wahrheitsfreund* (1837) and other publications. Among the most industrious of these collaborators was Msgr. Max Wurst, Msgr. Joh. Meier, Fr. Willibald Hackner – an excellent theologian – Frs. Alfred Mayer, OSB, H.J. Untraut, J. Karicher, CSSR, who wrote for *The Wanderer* as well as other papers; Msgr. A.J. Thiele, Fr. J.F. Meifuss and, in particular, J.N. Enziberger, who also published as a 'souvenir edition of the Columbus Jubilee' in 1892, the third 'directory of the German-speaking priests in the United States of America' – an imposing volume nearly 400 pages! Among the poets whose names we find in many old volumes, were Fr. M. Lochemes and Fr. John Rothensteiner, whose splendid German verses would not suggest their American birth.

“A noteworthy phenomenon of those days was the close cooperation between the German-American and the French-Canadian Catholic press. This alliance was greatly helped by the *Review* published by Arthur Preuss, through which the voice of the 'foreign-language' Catholic press also reached those who previously had often been deceived by inadequate and spurious translations, and found a hearing in M. Tardivel's *Verite* in Quebec. In all the bitter controversies in matters of principle, the German-American and the Franco-Canadian Catholics stood shoulder to shoulder.

“Besides a well-organized network of societies and an influential press, the German-American clergy constituted a strong phalanx in the controversies of the time. Milwaukee's Archbishop was the scholarly Michael Heiss, successor to the first Bishop Joh. Martin Henni. The later Archbishop, F.X. Katzer, was Bishop of Green Bay. His successor in Green Bay, and later in Milwaukee, was Sebastian Messmer (formerly professor at the Catholic University). Like these prelates, almost all of the eleven or twelve bishops of German ancestry were in close contact with the Central Verein and other endeavors of German-American Catholics.

“In the field of education the German-American Catholics had rendered yeoman's service, particularly by the part they played in the building and maintaining of parochial schools and the advancement of higher education. The Salesianum in St. Francis, Wis., founded under Bishop Henni by Dr. Joseph Salzmann, was for many years the outstanding seminary in the country. Dr. Salzmann, who as the successor of Bishop

Henni became rector of St. Francis, founded the first Catholic normal school and the Pio Nono College. In addition to the Salesianum, the papal college Josephinum in Columbus, O. (now in Worthington), was established in 1892, specifically as a German-American seminary by Msgr. Joseph Jessing.

“The various religious orders of German origin – Benedictines, Redemptorists, Franciscans, etc. – had established flourishing institutions of learning throughout the country. These institutions experienced a period of expansion and additional schools arose partly as a result of the *Kulturkampf* in Germany which brought many members of German men's and women's Orders to the New World. The German Province of the Jesuits, to mention but one instance, was a dynamo of thorough-going scholariness and a center radiating its beneficent influence everywhere. From it a number of outstanding teachers went forth to educate both young and old and to foster a vigorous religious life by parish missions.

“Indicative of the high intellectual level of those days is the fact that three large German Catholic publishing houses (Herder, Benzinger, Pustet) established branch firms here, which prospered together with a number of smaller publishers.

“Among the extraordinary features of the German parishes was their thorough-going organizational activities. This included not only societies represented in the national federation of the Central Verein, but also orphan societies, school societies, societies for the promotion of the Peter's Pence fund, etc. Much credit will always be due these parishes for the orphan asylums they built and maintained. Such orphanages were established in many big cities – Chicago, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Buffalo, St. Paul, etc. – and exist to this day, although ownership has been transferred to the diocese.

“In its entirety, German-American Catholic life was an imposing facet of the larger organism of the Church in this country. There were individual dreamers who took for granted the continuation of this phenomenal development and some, too, who insisted that changes in this happy situation would be tantamount to catastrophe. Those, however, who were acquainted with German-American history comprising only two or three generations, and in this they were confirmed by the obvious developments roundabout them. Serious priests and laymen, even if inclined by an understandable pride in the flourishing condition of their parishes, to delay the inevitable change, realized nevertheless that sooner or later the change would take place.

“What they hoped for was a gradual change, a change that would not bring about an abrupt break with the past but would ensue without injury to the family life, which in those days was characterized by far greater unity and solidarity than family life, generally speaking, is today. They hoped also to avoid a rapid change in order not to create the feeling among the older generations, those who had built the parishes, of

having been pushed aside.

“This hope was realized in the large majority of so-called national parishes, where the situation was permitted to take its natural course and where, as a result, storm and stress failed to inflict irreparable or lasting injury.”

* * *

For further reading, see: "The Peculiar Legacy of German-America," by Allan Carlson, published in the January/February 2002 edition of *The Family in America*, online, here: www.profam.org/pub/fia/fia_1601-02.htm

“...Individualism, materialism, and feminism stood as foes of the German-American home,” wrote Carlson. “The German *Catholic Tribune* editorialized in 1899 that individualism was 'a cold-hearted principle,' one tearing 'man from man' and proclaiming 'selfishness as the mainspring of all human action.' The *Luxemburger Gazette* said that individualism inflicted 'great wounds...if it is not checked in time.' In his 1889 booklet, *The Question of Nationality in Its Relation to the Catholic Church in the United States*, Anton Walburg emphasized how the 'true Americanism' of the Founders was devoted to the 'public good' and the 'general welfare.' 'False Americanism,' resting on 'infidelity and materialism,... adores the golden calf and is directed to the accumulation of wealth.' He warned: 'A republic that is not based upon morality and religion...is ripe for an ignoble grave.' A 1901 article in *The Catholic Tribune*, examining 'the Disorganization of the Family,' pointed to 'the increase of crime against born and unborn children,' 'Godless schools,' and the 'spirit of pleasure-seeking...that draws the parents from the home, [and] separates them from the children, for whom they have no time.' It was fear that 'the German' conception of the home and family was being undermined' by radical American individualism....”

Next week, we will see how, in Joseph Matt's analysis, Archbishop John Ireland's “Americanism” helped dissolve the German-American Catholics' vision for the future development of the United States.

#

For space reasons last week, *The Wanderer* had to exclude the penultimate paragraph from part IX of Joseph Matt's “Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota,” in which he discussed Archbishop John Ireland's education in France and Ireland's sense that he was a “child of France,” so will print it now as an appropriate lead-in to Matt's Part X.

In that penultimate paragraph, Matt wrote:

“John Ireland tried to adapt to the special needs of America the important incentives and ideas he had received from the rich intellectual life of France. And in his fervent enthusiasm he saw, almost exclusively, only the bright sides of the picture – in America as well as in France. In his most active years he probably regarded as a mere hypothesis the continuity of the struggle between Light and Darkness – at times smouldering under the ashes, at other times bursting into a searing flames. Open opposition to the forces militating against Christianity was not in conformity with his irenic program of 'letting down the drawbridges' and thus to bring about a conciliation of modern Society with the Church. For the same reason, he looked with disfavor upon attacks on secret societies and for American opponents of Masonry – Arthur Preuss, for instance – he had no more sympathy than for the rigorous attitude of Louis Gaston de Segur, Veuillot, and other Frenchmen.”

* * *

Here is Matt's Part X, published December 21, 1950:

“Most of the documents and brochures pertaining to the unpleasant chapters of the nationality conflict mentioned in the preceding article – the Milwaukee petition submitted to the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide (1885), Cahenslyism (1892), and the German Catholic gathering in Chaska (1888) – are in my possession. In addition, my files contain many important letters and pertinent newspaper clippings. A careful analysis of this material shows that misunderstandings, in discretions and officious meddling of the pres were in a large measure responsible for the bitterness which developed in the course of these controversies.

“With regard to misinterpretations and misinformation, a good deal of the responsibility must be charged against Catholic publications of the caliber of the *Western Watchman* in St. Louis, whose editor, the Rev. David Phelan, was an *enfant terrible* in many ways but did much harm. Fr. Phelan found his counterpart in a Buffalo priest, the Rev. George Zuercher, who, because of his nationalistic Alsatian resentment, poured vinegar and gall over everything of German origin. It was he who in various Prohibitionist scandal sheets dubbed the Order of St. Benedict (OSB) as the “Order of Sacred Brewers” because St. Vincent's in Pennsylvania produced a special brew for the abbey, and so unscrupulously calumniated German parishes in Buffalo that Bishop Ryan had to takes actions against him.

“Forty years ago when a malicious book against the temporal power of the Pope, entitled, *The Apple of Discord*, was anonymously published, I named the Rev. Zuercher in *The Wanderer* as its author, being familiar with his manner of thinking and writing, and demanded of him, albeit unsuccessfully, that he disavow my charge publicly. On the German side, it was among others, chiefly the Rev. Peter Rosen – though he also wrote a

number of worthwhile books – whose vitriolic pen was not conducive to peace. One of his pamphlets, *Archbishop Ireland As He Is*, which deals mainly with the Archbishop's colonization projects and was published under the *nom de plum* Ojintjintka, was perhaps only surpassed in asperity by a similar pamphlet of S.J. Ahern, a former editor of the *Northwestern Chronicle*.

“It must be said in all fairness and to the honor of the German Catholic press of those days that its attitude was thoroughly Catholic. That includes in first place *The Wanderer*, whose editor, the convert Hugo Klapproth, and his collaborators, quite in keeping with the newspaper's motto *Fortiter in re, suaviter in modo*, fought calmly and objectively for their opinions and convictions. The fact is that when Pope Leo XIII in his breve *Testem Benevolentiae* spoke what at that time as considered to be the final word in the matter of 'Americanism' – in which, in final analysis, all preceding controversies were included – they could look back with justifiable pride to the part they played, assured by their record that they had always stood where Peter stands.

* * *

“In itself the inhibition imposed by Archbishop Ireland on the Catholic organizations of Minnesota was of far less importance than his action in regard to the Milwaukee petition and Cahenslyism, If in discussing it I put the former ahead of the latter, although chronologically it followed the Milwaukee affair, I do so mainly because the misunderstandings are so obviously revealed here and, secondly, because certain misgivings expressed here by Archbishop Ireland are still reflected today in various tendencies pertaining to Catholic organizational endeavor.

“The facts are briefly these:

“At the annual convention of the Catholic Aid Association of Minnesota held in Mankato in 1887, it was decided thenceforth to combine with the annual conventions a Catholic Day celebration 'for the promotion of Catholic interests.' Chaska was chosen as the first convention city and the Catholic Day was scheduled for October 16, 1888. The program was to include addresses on: 1. The Papacy; 2. The Education of Youth; 3. Catholic Organizations; 4. The Social Question.

“On July 31, 1888, Fr. Casimir Hueppe, OSF, pastor of Chaska and Secretary of the Arrangements Committee, reported to the Archbishop in behalf of his committee (Rev. John Meier, George Mitsche and Matthias Meyers) requesting him to approve the program and procure the Holy Father's blessing for the meeting.

“Archbishop Ireland replied in a lengthy letter dated August 6, 1888, in which he emphatically refused to extend his approbation and to request the Holy Father's blessing.

Later, however, a compromise was arranged whereby the Archbishop permitted the Catholic Day observance to take place, provided it be labeled a 'dramatic musical entertainment.'

“In his letter to Fr. Casimir the Archbishop complained that the Chaska celebration was sailing under false colors, that the plan had not emanated from the Minnesota societies, but from the first German-American Catholic Day held in Chicago on September 6, 1887. The German Catholic organizations of Minnesota, he wrote *inter alia*, were indeed praiseworthy organizations and the Central Verein in particular, with which they were allied, 'had deserved in the past all praise and a close attention to its own legitimate business will deserve for it the same praise in the future.'

“In its reply – a copy of which lies before me with the original signatures of Rev. John Meier, Fr. Casimir Hueppe, John S. Grode and Matthias Koch – a delegation of the Catholic Aid Association sought to clarify various misunderstandings. In it they pointed out that the decision to hold such Catholic Day observations as planned at Chaska had been discussed for several years in the German Catholic press, and had, in fact, originated with the Central Verein – not with the Chicago Catholic Day. The reply further set forth that the Chicago Catholic Day had been approved by Archbishop Feehan and that plans for a German-American Catholic Day scheduled to take place in Cincinnati on September 3rd and 4th, 1888, had been approved by Archbishop Elder and that a number of Bishops had promised to be present.

* * *

“These and other statements in the reply of the delegation to the Archbishop are fully substantiated in the printed reports and proceedings of the Catholic Day observances and in the protocols of the Central Verein. The first general Catholic Day, in Chicago, had been an experiment but came off brilliantly. In the foreword to the 'Proceedings of the First General American-German Catholic Convention,' the secretary, Fr. William Tappert of Covington, Ky., writes: 'The undersigned, together with many others, had been desirous for many years to see the German Catholics of the United States pattern their annual conventions on the Catholic conventions of Germany. In an attempt to bring these hopes to fruition, he (the undersigned) proposed at the annual convention of the Catholic Central Verein in Toledo, Ohio, on Sept. 7, 1886, to combine a general Catholic meeting with the next general convention. This motion was enthusiastically accepted, and, together with Messers. Friedrich Arendes of St. Louis and William Casper of Milwaukee, the undersigned was asked to make arrangements for the first Catholic convention of this kind. In order that the Reverend Clergy should also take part in this convention, the undersigned called for a meeting for a number of his confreres from various dioceses of the United States, for Feb. 16, of this year, in Chicago. Approximately 65 priests accepted the invitation, and decided at their Chicago meeting

to found an American-German Priests' Society, the purpose of which would be to arrange and direct all subsequent Catholic Day meetings.'

“This is the history of the founding of the German-American Catholic Day and the Priests' Society. Neither here nor in the proceedings of the two can any evidence be found to confirm the serious mistrust and public accusations of Archbishop Ireland. (I shall elaborate upon this in the forthcoming article). 'The Catholic conventions,' we read in the invitation to the Chicago convention, 'have the noble task of arousing the Catholic conscience, of promoting Catholic interests in public and social life, and of helping to extend and make known to all, including her enemies, the Church's influence. Our era is an era of active endeavor, an era in which the genuine Catholic spirit is again being renewed and revitalized among all nations. Hence we American-German Catholics of the United States wish to join our efforts in the lofty struggle for truth, freedom and justice.'

“We are faced by important questions,' the invitation continues. 'The Labor Question [this was four years prior to *Rerum Novarum*!] hovers like a dark cloud over the social conditions of our day; the School Question touches upon the most sacred rights of the Church and the family; a prudent Catholic Press organization is a necessity; our organizational activity, based on common foundations of loyalty to the Church and national solidarity, must adapt itself to the needs and exigencies of the time if we intend to heed the warning of the Holy Father “to urge upon the workers the establishment of honorable labor organizations, so that will not fall prey to evil influences.”’

“That was the spirit animating the organizers and speakers of the Chicago convention with its more than 3,000 participants. Many Bishops and Abbots, the Center Party leader Windthorst and historian Johannes Janssen sent messages of felicitation. Bishop Michael Wigger of Newark, N.J., appeared with several other prelates at the meeting. Asked by the chairman to bestow his blessing, he said *inter alia*: '...Had I not received authorization from His Grace, the beloved Archbishop Feehan of Chicago, I would not dare to bestow the bishop's blessing outside of my own diocese. But sine I have received his authorization, I gladly and wholeheartedly give you this blessing.' And in his closing remarks, at the end of the convention, Bishop Wigger said: 'It is a great joy for me to say that the convention was held in full accord with the spirit of the Church....'

“The Pontifical Mass at the beginning of the second Catholic Day, in Cincinnati, was celebrated by Bishop Johannes Janssen of Belleville. The sermon was preached by Bishop Martin Marty, OSB, Vicar Apostolic of Dakota. Several Bishops and Abbots were present in the sanctuary. One of the speakers in the second public meeting was the German Center Party leader, Dr. Ernst Maria Lieber. In a message to Vicar General Muehlsiepen of St Louis and signed by Cardinal Simeoni, Prefect of the Propaganda, the Cardinal averred that the Holy Father was 'highly pleased with the sentiments of

childlike devotion and filial love to the Papal Chair which had been expressed [in an audience] in behalf of the German-speaking Catholics. Hence His Holiness is happy to impart, as a sign of his benevolence, his apostolic blessing to you and to all who will take part in the Catholic congress in Cincinnati on September 3 and 4.'

“The Catholic Days in Chicago and Cincinnati were dynamic and significant demonstrations, correct in every respect, animated by the true Catholic spirit.

“Nevertheless, Archbishop Ireland spoke out bitterly against the Chicago conclave and cast unfavorable predictions regarding the prospective Cincinnati convention.

“Why?”

* * *

One of the great formators of Joseph Matt was the German Catholic politician Ludwig Windthorst (January 17, 1812-March 14, 1891). Here is a brief introduction to this fascinating politician, by his English biographer Margaret Lavinia Anderson, author of:

“Ludwig Windthorst was Imperial Germany's greatest parliamentarian. Counting his terms in the diet of the Kingdom of Hanover, he served 35 years in the various legislatures of his country. His skill in debate was equaled by no other deputy; his tactical genius, only by Bismarck. August Bebel can compare with Windthorst in his skill at keeping warring factions together in a powerful, disciplined party, but the Social Democrats faced neither the opportunities nor the dangers confronting Windthorst's party – the Catholic Zentrum – and consequently Bebel's parliamentary task was a much simpler one.... Windthorst's influence outside parliament was in many ways as powerful as his influence in it. In his handling of party machinery and his relation to the masses – his nearest analogues are Daniel O'Connell and Charles Stewart Parnell. In the Church he came to exercise an influence over appointments that rivaled that of any bishop and that was no less decisive for being informal....

“The uncrowned king of Catholic Germany, he was also its unofficial *Kultusminister*.... By his opponents Windthorst was continually vilified as the 'Father of Lies', an 'enemy of the state', a 'democrat', and the 'evil genius of the German nation'. Within Catholic Germany, on the other hand, he was revered long after his death, and the Windthorstbund, established to keep his legacy green, was dissolved only by Hitler. Yet today, except among professional historians, the man is forgotten.... This neglect is no longer merely a question of doing justice to Catholic history, important as that is. For though German Catholics lost that first *Kulturkampf*, in spite of having an extraordinary leader, a mass political party and a flourishing press, they left a rich, complex history of political and social struggle, which as America's own *Kulturkampf* sharpens, cries out

for examination and evaluation. If we conclude there are no lessons to be drawn – the situations are too disparate – we can still take heart from the titanic battle little Windthorst and his brave fellow Catholics waged against the most powerful state in Europe, very much in the spirit Pope John Paul II exhorts us to battle – 'Do Not Be Afraid' – against the most powerful ideologies of our time....”

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Continuing with Joseph Matt's “Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota,” Part IX, published December 14, 1950.

“The nationality conflict within the Catholic Church of America in the last decades of the nineteenth century probably would have remained an insignificant episode, like many other concomitants of that era of unparalleled developments, had it not been for the fact that Archbishop John Ireland, one of the most remarkable and influential men of his age, played a leading part in it and gave it the imprint of his strong personality.

“For reasons indicated in last week's article, the 'German Question' was the most serious phase of the conflict. Archbishop Ireland dealt with it in a number of actions, particularly by his opposition to certain petitions submitted to the Propaganda de Fide in 1886, and as the leader in the vehement fight, in 1891-92, on what came to be called Cahenslyism. Prior to these major events he had, in his own diocese, taken a stand against a Catholic gathering in Chaska arranged by the German Catholic societies of Minnesota (1888).

“This attitude of the Archbishop can hardly be attributed to nationalistic narrowness or picayune motives. It proceeded, in the first place, from one of the fundamental ideas which were foremost in his mind for many years and aimed at the conciliation of modern culture, particularly in America, with the Church. Because of his belief that prejudices against the Church as a 'foreign institution' were a serious impediment to such a conciliation, he stressed the 'Americanization' of the immigrants, often without making sufficient allowances for a necessary period of transition in which the immigrants could adjust themselves to their new environments. Ideal in its concept, the strong inclination to win the modern world back to Christianity and the Church emanated in a large measure from the lasting influences of French thinking which the third ordinary of St. Paul had absorbed in his most impressionable years, during his seminary studies.

“Archbishop Ireland himself frequently emphasized, both publicly and privately, his great love for France and the decisive influence of his French education on his philosophy of life. In the late fall of 1912 I had a personal experience in this regard.

“It was at the time of the First Balkan War in which, encouraged by Russia, the Balkan Entente, formed shortly before, undertook to push Turkey out of Europe. One of the immediate results was the intensification of the old Austro-Russian conflict, – the explosion of the 'European Powder Barrel' threatened to bring about a general war. Russia, which ten years before, under pressure by her difficulties in Eastern Asia, had assented to an agreement with Austria, now, in the interest of her historical designs, backed the Balkan States with all her might. Austria, struggling for self preservation, endeavored to limit pan-Slavic Serbia's expansion in the case of the expected Balkan victory.(and continued this policy in the subsequent London Conference of 1913 with a measure of success, by the establishment of an independent Albania – in order to keep Russia's Serbian satellite away from the Adria). The Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913 were forerunners of the First World War in which Austria's historic policy suffered utter defeat, and essentially revolved around the same conflict of interests which keeps Southeastern Europe in turmoil today – with Russia., after having attained most of her other objectives, still seeking the 'window to the Adria,' an objective which today, with the aid of the recalcitrant Marshal Tito, is being blocked by the West, as it had formerly been blocked by old Austria-Hungary.

“A testimonial celebration arranged by Archbishop Ireland in honor of the Empire Builder James J. Hill, the generous benefactor of the St. Paul Seminary, coincided with one of the critical moments of the First Balkan War. The celebration, to which about 20 guests had been invited, was held in the Seminary. Between the dinner in the refectory building and the formal program in the maxima where Fr. Francis Missia presented the students' choir in a number of selections from Wagner's Tannhauser, I sat together with Prof. Dr. Schaefer, rector of the seminary, and Prof. Dr. John A. Ryan. Like a grandseigneur who had just stepped out of an oil painting in a palace of the ancien regime, and yet the perfect modern democrat, Archbishop Ireland moved among the different groups of his guests. Sitting down for a few minutes at our table, he asked me what, as a journalist, I thought of the Balkan situation. I expressed my opinions, stressing in particular the Austrian point of view and the significance of Vienna's policy for the entire West. His Grace fully agreed. 'You are quite right,' he said, 'I am all for Austria...!' But after a moment of silence he added the fatal restrictive clause, '...Unless France takes a hand!' This, under the circumstances, could have but the one implication: the participation of France, as a member of the Entente, on the side of Russia! As far as my capacity as a guest permitted, I questioned the logic of this attitude, but failed to make my arguments convincing although my distinguished host listened and replied with exquisite friendliness.

* * *

“Archbishop Ireland furnished a comprising analysis of his relations to France in June

1892, when, on his journey homeward from Rome, he stayed for a few days in Paris. A committee of leading Frenchmen urged him to make a public address on what they termed 'Choses d'Amerique,' and on the evening of June 18th, he delivered his famous speech in the Hall of the Geographical Society before an invited audience of about twelve hundred ladies and gentlemen, the elite of the city of Paris. Reminding his audience of his years of study in France, he said, 'There was a time when your language was familiar to my ears, when I spoke it by day, and dreamed in it by night.' He acknowledged as a compliment a remark of the chairman that he 'in some measure was a child of France,' adding: 'Yes, please take me to be in some measure a child of France. I rejoice to believe that I am her child in not a few fibres of my being....France is largely the mother of my ideas, and much of my heart has always belonged to her....To France America owes her freedom....Your explorers made known to the civilized world the territory of the United States. Your missionaries were among the first to teach the Catholic faith to the aborigines and settlers in America; your armies created the Republic of the United States....'

“The address was, in its main parts, a panegyric on American democracy and 'a free Church in a free country' – which the speaker-- with specific references to Pope Leo's encyclical, published a short time before, counseling to French Catholics the recognition of the Republic – painted as a model to be emulated by France. The peroration set forth the ideals to be followed by both nations and repeated the speaker's love and admiration for both.

“Above me,' he said, 'the tricolor' of France and the star-spangled flag of the United States intertwine their folds –the symbol of the union of love and respect which exists between the two great republics....Flag of the United States, flag of my country! I offer to thee the tribute of most sincere allegiance and most warm affection. My heart, my life are thine. I am proud of thee for the glories that thou dost represent; I cherish thee for the liberty thou dost ensure. As a Bishop of the Catholic Church I praise and thank thee for the freedom which is granted to her wherever thou reignest. I pray the God of nations to bless and guard America.

“And while I am most loyal to my country, ladies and gentlemen, permit me to say that when ever I see the 'tricolor' of France, my soul will go out to it in esteem and gratitude, and wherever the must of the name of France echoes in my ear, the deep fulness of my heart will vibrate in love, and my lips will invoke upon your country the blessings of Heaven' (*The Church and Modern Society*, pp. 347-377).

“Here no longer speaks merely the traditional gratitude of Catholic Ireland towards the great friend in times of persecution, nor merely the sentimental admiration and love for Lafayette (whose attitude in the terrible days of the French Revolution was anything but admirable). It is, as the speaker himself emphasizes, 'in some measure a son of France'

who pays homage to the mother of ideas.

* * *

“Msgr. Matthew Smith fell victim to a droll anachronism when, a few years ago, he named in his weekly letter ('Listening In') as one of John Ireland's French professors Bishop Bossuet who had died more than 150 years before the young Irish-American's arrival in France. But the historical error probably may be pardoned as an inadvertent or accidental association of ideas – it is a fact that an intellectual kinship existed between the genius of Bossuet, bishop of Meaux, and that of John Ireland, Archbishop of St. Paul.

“Bossuet, the most celebrated among the great bishops of the time of *le Roi Soleil*, Louis XIV, was perhaps the greatest orator who has ever appeared in the Christian pulpit (Brunetiere). Called 'The Eagle of Meaux' by his contemporaries, he penetrated to unusual heights of human thought and fostered new ideas in regard to the application of Christian principles to the problems of life and politics. In this he did not escape serious errors, some of which actually bordered on heresy, particularly in the famous four Gallican Articles drawn up by him in the Assembly of the Clergy of France in 1681-82. These, in short, aimed at a restraint of the Pope's authority in the Church in favor of that of the bishops and the king, or, as Bossuet's great admirer, Brunetiere, apologetically put it, 'seem to have altogether exceeded the measure of what it was useful and necessary to say in order to defend the temporal power of the prince or the independence of nations against the Roman Curia.' And the same Brunetiere emphasized: 'Bossuet was convinced that it was of the greatest moment not indeed to “minimize” the demands of the Catholic verity, but at all event not to exaggerate those demands,' – a tendency which was so characteristic of French Catholicism in the past century and led to dangerous consequences in the history of 'Americanism' as the Papal breve *Testem benevolentiae* clearly pointed out. It is also a fact that although a man of deep piety, Bossuet as a controversialist was very severe, if not vindictive, toward those who, like the gently Bishop Fenelon of Cambrai, held views different from his own.

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“I don't know the names of John Ireland's teachers at Maximieux and Hyeres. But ideas dating back to men like Bossuet and, of course, those of the leading men at the time of his theological studies, impressed themselves deeply and permanently on his mind and fundamentally influenced his attitude.

“The voices of brilliant men were heard in France throughout the nineteenth century with its kaleidoscopic changes in the public life of the nation. The days of temporal glory when a Bossuet saw assembled around his pulpit the social and intellectual

aristocracy had long since been blotted out by the tempests of the Revolution. Cardinal Maury wrote their epitaph in his essay on public oratory ending with the sombre sentence: 'Everything ends, everything dies, everything is carried away by the current of time, everything is being swallowed up.'

“The writer was the same Maury who, together with the majority of the French Bishops, and in contrast to his wavering and even compromising attitude in later years, towered like a rock of bronze in the tempest of the Revolution, while the number of traitors of the type of Sieyes was small. In subsequent years new revolutions engulfed France and inflicted new wounds on the Church. Louis Philippe, the 'bourgeois king' who after the Revolution of 1830 became ruler by popular acclaim, was unfriendly to the Church because of his anxiety not to lose popularity with Voltaire's descendants, and under Napoleon III, too, the Church remained in poverty and deprived of fundamental rights. But the fight waged for the liberty of education and the rights of the Church by Dupanloup, Montalembert, Lacordaire, Ozanam, Veuillot and other leaders once again made manifest the strength inherent in this nation so often disrupted – this nation of Jacobins and Petroleuses as well as Crusaders, this nation which produced a Richelieu as well as a Jean Baptiste Marie Vianney, the Cure of Ars.

“Eminent men were active in France in the seminary years of John Ireland and in the periods preceding and following them. They revived, contrary to Maury's gloomy prediction, the ancient fame of French pulpit oratory, met courageously the problems of the new era and restored, in a measure at least, the position Christianity formerly had held. 'For most Frenchmen,' the great German scholar Msgr. Dr. Franz Hettinger wrote in the 'sixties in an evaluation of Lacordaire, 'France existed only since the Revolution and Napoleon I under who the nation covered itself with glory; peasants and workers regarded the preceding times as days of barbarism and dynastic oppression,' and the intellectuals were cynics and sceptics and scoffers.

“To reach that generation totally estranged from the Church and Christianity, it was necessary to chart new roads and establish new contacts. 'For generations,' Hettinger said, 'which had nothing in common with the Frenchmen of yore who sat at the feet of Bossuet, a new form of approach had to be created, in order to gather around the pulpit also those who long since had slost the way to church. Lacordaire wanted to present the truths, unchangeable as God and eternally old, under new aspects and adapted to the philosophy of the modern world. He wanted to show that what modern man seeks and to what the noblest minds of our times aspire is preserved in the deposit of Faith; he sought to Christianize modern thought, not to modernize Christian ideas – a danger, however, which is always very close at hand' (*Aus Welt und Kirech*, 2Bd., p.646).

“Lacordaire himself at one time had been in danger of being wrecked at this reef – like so many before and after him. In his younger years he was closely associated with de

Lamennais, one of the outstanding thinkers of the past century. In conjunction with him, Montalembert and other friends he founded the famous *Avenir* which propagated with persuasive eloquence and in brilliant style the reconstruction of the Church on the basis of political democratic principles as offering the sole hope for a brighter future. When Lamennais' ideas had been condemned by Rome, Lacordaire disassociated himself from him and, following his own genius, became one of the leading spokesmen of the Catholic renaissance. Lamennais' fundamental ideas, in spite of the personal failure of the unfortunate man, remained a living force of the movement to overcome the religious indifference born of Reformation, Deism, and Revolution, and, by ridding the Church of the old political and social ties, to regain for her the leadership of nations.

“The ideas of the new Catholic era in France, in spite of formal contradictions, to some extent had a Gallican tinge or eventually reverted to Gallicanism – the same Gallicanism which has been a flaw in French Catholicism for centuries; to which the great Bossuet had paid tribute; which had come to the fore under Napoleon; which was revived once more by the Action Francaise.. –

“Only a few years after his panegyric in Paris a new wave of anti-clericalism swept over France. Combes, a disciple of Voltaire who demanded the eradication of *l'Infame* – the Church, boasted of having 'extinguished the stars of heaven.' Archbishop Ireland, however, did not permit French politics to dampen his love for France. The country of his ideas and ideals remained for him the arbiter of the world and as late as 1912 he confessed: Austria is in the right – as long as France permits it!”

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As much as Joseph Matt respected Archbishop John Ireland, he never could understand the Archbishop of St. Paul's animosity toward German-American Catholics – or did he?

In Part X of “A Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota,” published December 28, 1950, Matt continued with the back story of the archbishop's opposition to a German-American Catholic convention in Chaska, Minn.

“The preceding article gave an outline of the history of the first Minnesota Katholikentage, in Chaska, on October 16, 1888, which, after long negotiations between the German Catholic societies and His Grace Archbishop John Ireland, was staged as a 'dramatic and musical entertainment.'

“In the minds of those not familiar with the conditions at the time a study of the pertinent documents does not furnish a satisfactory answer to the question why the

demonstration originally had actually been prohibited. Assuming the correctness of Archbishop Ireland's contention that the gathering at Chaska had been planned within the framework of the General German Catholic Days and had been promoted particularly by the first of these conventions, in Chicago, 1887, they will ask why such connections should have exposed it to suspicion and censure.

“The fact is that the Chicago gathering of 1887 as well as that in Cincinnati on September 4-5, 1888 (six weeks before the 'dramatic and musical entertainment' at Chaska), were impressive demonstrations of Catholic life and endeavors. The addresses that were given and the resolutions that were adopted were Catholic in spirit and tone. Bishops and prelates participated in the church services and civic forums. The Archbishop of Chicago and the Archbishop of Cincinnati had given their approval, and messages from Rome conveying the Papal Blessing were read. Archbishop Ireland, however, wrote in his letter to Fr. Casimir: 'To those Conventions [Chicago and Cincinnati], I very frankly say, I cannot give my approval.'

“The reason for this negative attitude he discussed at length in his letter. He insisted that the Papal approbation of the Chicago convention has not been requested through prescribed channels – and had been given only conditional – presupposing episcopal approval – and that such approval had 'not as yet been obtained for the Cincinnati Convention.'

“His Grace apparently did not have a clear picture either in regard to the course taken by the men responsible for both gatherings or the response of the Holy See. Many encouraging messages from members of the Hierarchy, the active participation of a number of Bishops, the definite approval of the Ordinaries of Chicago and Cincinnati, and particularly the warm letter of Pope Leo to the Cincinnati Katholikentage proved beyond doubt that Archbishop Ireland, presumably misinformed by non-official meddlers, erred when he raised the accusation of open violation and defiance of ecclesiastical discipline and the explicit wishes of the Holy See.

“A thorough examination of the facts reveals that the alleged violation of formalities could not have been the primary cause of Archbishop Ireland's strong objections. That, in fact, is evident from the contents of the second part of his letter. There His Grace in a remarkable manner puts the German-American Catholic laymen and the German-American clergy in juxtaposition: He praises the laymen's societies, especially the 'Catholic Central Verein,' but censures severely 'the German-American Clerical Union' (the Priest's Society).

“Of the former he says: 'I wish to day that my present strictures do not in the remotest manner touch upon the German Catholic “Central Verein.” The “Central Verein” has deserved in the past all praise. A close attention to its own legitimate business will

deserve for it the same praise in the future.'

“Of the Priesterverein, however, he speaks in an entirely different tone. The prime organizers of the Catholic Days as well as the Clerical Union 'are the same men,' he writes, and these men, he complains, usurp rights completely outside their jurisdiction. They speak in their messages of 'the quickening of Catholic consciousness and the furthering of the religious interests of the American Church in general, and in particular of the Germans in America.' [which is a very free translation indeed of Fr. Tappert's invitation to the Chicago Katholikentage, quoted in last week's article.]: 'the furtherance of important and common interests'; 'the doing of great things for the honor of God, and working with more persistence to save souls,' etc.

“What,' asks Archbishop Ireland, 'does the formation of associations of this nature mean, but the institution of new and self-authorized bodies to serve as tribunals to discuss and pass judgment upon Catholic morals and Catholic discipline?' He answers his question as follows: 'Catholics are taught that religious matters are in keeping of each Bishop of his diocese, whatever the race or the language of the people concerned, and from him they know there is an appeal, should he neglect his duty, to the Supreme Head of the Church or his representatives. A new order of things is now proposed – organizations of priests and laymen are formed in each State, apart from diocesan limitations, notice of the existence of which, after they have been formed, may or may not be given to the Bishops. The real and controlling power to which those State Conventions and Societies are subject is not the Bishop, or the Bishops, within each State, but national conventions or assemblies. To the minds of the leaders in this new order of things the hierarchical organization in the Church must have appeared quite insufficient, or so neglectful of its duties as to need to be supplemented by self-constituted “citizens committees”.'

* * *

“The bitterness with which Archbishop Ireland stated his objections reflected, more than anything else, his strong antagonism against the German-American Priest's Society, whose views on the School question, on the question of Secret Societies, on the National question, and on the question of 'Americanism' differed from those held by the Archbishop and conflicted with his endeavors and hopes to bring about a conciliation of modern society with the Church. The Priesterverein was a formidable organization, having in its ranks a number of militant scholars, and its close cooperation with a strong 'foreign' element of the laity made its participation in the controversies of the times all the more odious in the eyes of the Archbishop, because he saw in it a threat to the success of his struggle for 'the American Church' – a Church which by her outward appearance and her public conduct was to overcome the distrust on the part of non-Catholics and non-Christians, of her 'foreign,' 'ultramontane' character. The concluding sentences of

Archbishop Ireland's letter to Fr. Casimir divulge, to some extent, his fears along these lines.

“Those conventions and clerical societies,' he wrote, 'are based upon lines of foreign races and languages, a most dangerous omen for the peace and oneness of the Church in America. For the same reasons we may have Polish, Bohemian, Irish, French conventions and clerical societies for the furtherance of the religious interests of those several nationalities. Already certain ones among them have given unmistakable signs of strong tendencies in this direction. Episcopal approval of the German movement will compel the approval of other national movements as they arise. And, then, what chaos in the Church?...'

“All this, and more, is partly clarified and partly repeated with added emphasis in the last sentences of Archbishop Ireland's letter. He wrote: 'That in practical dealings with our Catholic populations special considerations have to be given to race and to language, no one will deny. But, again, those considerations must in the Church be sought for through the duly constituted authority of each diocese, before which Catholics are all alike in the obedience they owe and in the care they are to receive, whatever be the accidental differences of race distinguishing them from one another.

“I am not afraid that priests or laymen of German origin will misunderstand my remarks. German-American Catholics are most loyal, and devoted children of the Church. The instigators of this movement are not the representatives of them. It does them a serious injustice by placing them in a false position before Church and country, and I am confident they will be careful not to encourage it.

“For those reasons, and viewing the proposed Chaska Convention as intimately connected with the German-American Catholic Convention of Chicago, and the German-American Clerical Union, I cannot give it my approval, nor can I aid your committee in obtaining for it the Apostolic blessing.'

“Readers not conversant with the history of the 'eighties and 'nineties, or only superficially informed, could draw the conclusion from Archbishop Ireland's letter that the German-American clergy of those days was at the point of launching – or actually had launched – a dangerous conspiracy against Church and State and that the danger had to be met with resolute determination. What other conclusion can be drawn when we are face to face with the unique spectacle of a Bishop protesting and warning laymen – whose loyal and devoted attitude he praises – against apparent cabals of a priests' society!

“The accusations would have been less sensational had they been directed at a small group of clergymen. But the Priesterverein at that time had about nine hundred

members, and at least the prominent among these were among the outstanding priests of their respective dioceses. I have personally known a large number of them in the East and the West. – men like Dr. Heiter and Dr. Hoelscher in Buffalo; Msgr Goller, Msgr Holweck, Msgr. Willmes, Msgr. Rothensteiner, Msgr Wentker and others in the Archdiocese of St. Louis; Msgr Cluse in Belleville; Msgr. A.J. Thiele in Chicago; Msgr. Abbelin, Msgr. Rainer, Msgr. Lochemes in Milwaukee; Msgr. Heer, Msgr Boedin, Fr. Brune, Fr. Kuemper in Iowa; Msgr. Wurst, Msgr Meier, Fr. Koeberl in Minnesota. At the Katholikentag in Milwaukee (1898) I became acquainted with many others, including Fr. Boonemann and Fr. Enzlberger and Fr Hagen and other officers of the Priest's Society.

“These are some of the splendid priests of the 'Clerical Union' of whom I can speak with a measure of authority because of my personal acquaintance and I do not hesitate to say that I have never met more exemplary and more conscientious men. I don't know whether Archbishop Heiss, and Archbishop Katzer and Archbishop Messmer, who at that time were still Bishops, and the Bishops Janssen, Horstmann, Wigger, Zardetti, etc. were among the members of the Priest's Society, but I believe they also belonged to it. At any rate, there were closely connected to the Priesterverein as well as the Katholikentag.

“And these men were said to have intrigued against episcopal authority and striven for dangerous innovations! To have violated ecclesiastical discipline, rendered unauthorized decisions and judgments, propagated all kinds of dissensions and divisions, if not schisms, and thus to have led the laity into dangerous paths! (By the way, the constitutions of the Priest's Society explicitly restricted discussions in the meetings as well as at the Catholic Days to 'questions permitting free debate' and the accusation that the Priesterverein and Katholikentage constituted themselves as 'self-authorized tribunals' was refuted by the statutes of the Society enjoining its members to 'cooperate in the carrying out of such resolutions as had been adopted with the approval of the Bishops present.')

“I frankly admit that a perusal of the documents of those bygone days stirs my innermost soul – realizing the incalculable energies which were used up, in the attack as well as in the defense, and visualizing all the constructive endeavors for which these wasted energies meant an irreparable loss.”

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A historian's perspective: In his book *The Conservative Reformers: German-American Catholics and the Social Order* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), Notre Dame historian Philip Gleason observed of the years on which Joseph Matt reflected:

“To list all of the disputed issues among American Catholics in the last quarter of the nineteenth century is to invite despair at the thought that some order has to be imposed upon them. There were controversies over the Knights of Labor, the theories of Henry George, the parochial schools, the founding of the Catholic University of America, the nationality question, the participation of Catholics in interfaith gatherings, secret societies, temperance, and – as a climax – over the alleged heresy of 'Americanism'...”

American Catholics, Gleason explained, fell largely into two camps: the liberals and the conservatives, with the latter largely led by German-American Catholics, though the prelates most often associated with the conservative stance were Archbishop Michael Corrigan of New York and Bishop Bernard McQuaid of Rochester. The liberal leaders, as we have seen, were Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore, Ireland in St. Paul and Bishop John Keane of Richmond.

“Although there were many differences on specific issues,” Gleason continued, “in general the liberals took a more optimistic view of the relationship of the Catholic Church and American culture than did the conservatives. The liberals held that Catholicism and the institutions of the country were admirably suited to each other and that the prospects of the Church were brighter in the open society of the United States than in the tradition-bound states of Europe, where the dead hand of the past weighed heavily on all efforts to bring the Church into fruitful contact with the modern world. They also held, however, that the fullest benefits from its American opportunity the Church must become Americanized....”

“The more cautious conservatives, on the other hand, had reservations about the easy compatibility of Catholicism and the American spirit. They were less impressed by the glorious opportunity open to American Catholics in reconciling the Church and modern culture than there were by indisputable Protestantism and periodic nativism of Americans; hence they emphasized the need to maintain the traditional integrity of Catholic life and thought as the surest means of maintaining the faith in the United States. To men of this persuasion, the flexibility commended by the liberals looked much like laxity, accommodation suggested compromise, and adjustment to the new environment resembled capitulation before the enemy....”

“The conservative position recommended itself with special force to the German-American Catholics. For them Catholicism was bound up with a language and culture which seemed more foreign to American society than that of the English-speaking Catholics, and they feared that Americanization might lead the German Catholic immigrant to jettison his religion along with the language and cultural outlook....”

According to the Wikipedia entry on German-Americans, today Americans of German descent remain the largest ethnic group in the American melting pot, comprising 15.2

percent of the population, for a total of 42,841,569 individuals, down from 58 million in 1990, of whom 1.5 percent speak German.

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This week, in Part XII of Joseph Matt's "Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota," published January 4, 1951, Matt movingly describes Archbishop John Ireland's change of heart with relation to his German flock after his visit to the German convention in Chaska, Mn., then a town of about 2,000, 40 percent of whom were German Catholics.

"October 16, 1888, contrary to the unfavorable auspices during some time of the preparations, witnessed a great manifestation of the German Catholic societies in Minnesota. Chaska on that day was the gathering place of German Catholic representatives from all parts of the State. Reports in the daily papers estimated the number of visitors at five thousand – an impressive figure in those days. *The Wanderer*, while giving no figures, stated 'the visitors from St. Paul and Minneapolis alone could easily have made up a mass meeting.' About twenty-five societies arrived in corpore, a number of them on special trains. It was only thanks to the hospitality of the Chaska people that the throngs could be properly housed and fed. All houses were decorated with festoons and flags. Although it was late in the season, the young people had managed to gather quantities of fall flowers and branches in the woods and erected triumphal arches bearing German inscriptions. The Church of the Holy Angels was much too small to admit even the greater part of local people and the visitors and hundreds of them knelt on the parish grounds, praying and singing. There was a big parade in the afternoon, followed by the Katholikentag which, by way of compromise, had been labeled a 'dramatic and musical entertainment.'

"His Grace Archbishop Ireland undoubtedly had meanwhile convinced himself that the celebration at Chaska was, after all, not the dangerous manifestation aversion to the German-American Priests' Society had suggested to him, and he made the gracious gesture of participating in the convention. He assisted from the throne at the solemn High Mass and later attended the Katholikentag.

"After the sermon, by the Provincial Fr. Michael Richardt, OSF, he gave an address, in which he assured the German Catholic societies of his confidence but refrained from modifying his preceding strictures in regard to the Priesterverein. He praised the German Catholics for their loyalty to the Church and their persevering support of parochial schools and encouraged the preservation of the German mother tongue and national traditions, emphasizing that he had no respect for people who lightheartedly discard their national heritage. *The Wanderer* wrote in an extensive comment in its issue of

October 25, 1888: 'If Germans and those of other nationalities would, as far as circumstances and obvious difficulties permit, everywhere act in accordance with the principles expounded by His Grace the Archbishop, there would be no cause for all the deplorable discordances and frictions among German and non-German children of the one Mother.'

“It was very likely due to the subsequent unpleasant developments of the nationality conflict, that German Catholics remembered the prelude of the convention at Chaska more vividly than the friendly words of the Archbishop at the gathering itself. As late as 1897, when I came to St Paul as a young journalist, it was often mentioned at society meetings and in private conversation. Archbishop Ireland apparently was aware of that and on numerous occasions, particularly after the bitter Cahensly conflict (which will be discussed in a later article), he made it a point, in sermons and addresses, to wipe out unpleasant memories of former misunderstandings and disputes. I remember particularly his address at the annual meeting of the Minnesota Central Verein (Staatsverband in those days) at Stillwater in October 1898; his sermon at the Golden Jubilee of the Assumption parish in St. Paul in October, 1906; his sermon at the investiture of Msgr. B. Sandmeier in New Ulm in May, 1909; his address at the annual convention of the Catholic Central Verein of America in St. Paul (in the Senate chamber of the old capitol, which has long since been razed) in August, 1899, and at the convention of the same organization in August, 1915.

“It was, however, only after 1900 that (with one exception) his remarks on German-American Catholics were entirely free of barbs, animated by undiluted friendliness and paternal affection. On preceding occasions he sometimes subtly referred to the controversies still in progress and at the celebration in New Ulm there were echoes of the old displeasure with the German-American Priests' Society.

“At the convention in Stillwater Archbishop Ireland made his appearance unannounced, accompanied by the Very Rev. John N. Sariha, pastor of St. Francis de Sales parish in St. Paul and Vicar General, later Bishop of Lead, S. Dak. It was a few months prior to the promulgation of the breve *Testem Benevolentiae*. The controversy on 'Americanism' had in the preceding months reached a climax with the publication of an English edition of Abbe Maignen's book, *Le Pere Hecker est-il un saint?*, and Archbishop Ireland was making preparations to go to Rome to avert the expected condemnation of 'Americanism.' A certain irritation, manifesting itself in the address of His Grace and particularly in a sequel to the convention, was therefore humanly understandable.

“While the editor-in-chief of *The Wanderer* was in Europe during the summer months, I had, with the impetuosity of youth, participated in the controversy on 'Americanism,' and at least one sentence in the Archbishop's address, accompanied by an unmistakable gesture, was directed at the press table standing near the speaker's rostrum. 'I don't want

you to utter the term “Americanize” as terms of reproach,' the Archbishop said. The text of the Archbishop's speech, which was published in *The Wanderer* of the same week from the notes I had taken in shorthand, clearly shows how deeply he was hurt by the attacks on the disputed theses under the collective title of Americanism, and how anxiously he sensed the harm that from this seeming disparagement of things American might arise to mar the success of his endeavor to bring about a conciliation of modern society with the Church. He defended vigorously – but not in conformity with the formulae later applied in the breve – Americanism as the particular manifestation of national thought and the American way of life, and the Americanization of immigrants, that is, their adaptation to the new environment, as a matter of prudence as well as duty.

“But the breve of January 22, 1899, by no means condemned justifiable national traits but only 'the opinions which some comprise under the head of Americanism,' and had nothing to do with Americanizing in the ordinary sense. The breve, as well as the preceding controversy on Americanism, dealt with actual errors as the text fully explains. (The test is published, under the heading 'True and False Americanism in Religion,' in *The Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII*, Benziger Bros., 1903).

“Fr. Alfred Mayer, OSB, who spoke immediately after the Archbishop, wove into his talk remarks which were correct in content but, as to form, could be interpreted in those days of tension and friction as a criticism of the Archbishop's statements. And since the speaker, revered to this day all who knew him, had on former occasions, particularly in the School question taken a stand different from the Archbishop, criticism from him was especially unwelcome. When Fr. Alfred a short time later spoke (on the Papacy) at one of the 'Katholikentage in Kleinen' recommended at the Stillwater convention in a resolution submitted by me, Archbishop Ireland requested his superiors to remove him as pastor of the Assumption parish. The trustees submitted a petition for his reinstatement and finally sent Mr. John S. Grode and Peter M. Kerst to Washington to appeal to the Papal Delegate. Because the Archbishop's action was interpreted as an expression of non-confidence – Fr. Alfred being one of the outstanding priests in the organization – it was intended for a time to transfer to another city the Central Verein convention of August 1899 which had been approved by His Grace after he had made sure that the Priesterverein would not meet here.

“The Central Verein convention in the following August was a grand success in spite of these disturbing preliminaries. The services on Sunday were held in the Church of the Assumption. The parade in the afternoon, with ten thousand men in line, was an event in the history of St. Paul, surpassing in the G.A.R. [Grand Army of the Republic] parade of three years before – in those days the criterion of any convention city. At the festivities of welcome in the old Auditorium, at the corner of Cedar and 8th Sts., sang a mass chorus unparalleled in all these years, made up of the choirs of all German Catholic churches in the city. On Monday evening a Katholikentag (at which the author gave one

of his first speeches) was held in the same building. Archbishop Ireland not only pontificated on Sunday but also extended greetings, together with several other Bishops of the St. Paul Province, to the convention in the Senate chamber of the Capitol.

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Fr. Alfred a few years later attended the Jubilee celebration of Assumption parish at the express wish and invitation of Archbishop Ireland, and the words of esteem addressed to him at the banquet wrote finis to former disputes.

“At this Jubilee celebration of the oldest German parish in Minnesota, Archbishop Ireland spoke at length of his relations with the Catholics of German descent. He unreservedly praised them for their great contribution to the development of the Northwest and particularly the Archdiocese of St. Paul. He stressed the importance of the German element in a frank statement to the effect that he would not have risked to undertake the great task of building a Cathedral, had it not been for his implicit confidence in the generous cooperation of his German diocesans.

“The laying of the cornerstone of the Cathedral was an important manifestation of the unity and harmony of the different nationalities. When the masses of the societies of all nationalities and tongues passed the reviewing stand on Cathedral Hill, row on row, with flags waving and the bands playing airs of the old homelands – it was like an illustration to a word of Dante: *Diverse voci fan giu dolci note*. Diverse voices jointly create harmony. The wreath of chapels around the Cathedral apse, dedicated to the patron saints of the nationalities of the Archdiocese, have perpetuated this idea in marble and granite.

“The relations between Archbishop Ireland and the German Catholics and their societies and organizations since the turn of the century were of a most friendly nature. The Archbishop was anxious to demonstrate this pleasant fact, and that was, as he emphasized in private letters as well as in public statements, one of the chief reasons for the promotion of the Rev. B. Sandmeier of New Ulm, a leader in German Catholic organizations, to the rank of prelate. But his event, barely a year later, had an evil aftermath for which the poor Monsignor (who died a few years later in his Westphalian homeland) was less responsible than a low, most scandalous intrigue whose instigators and perpetrators later revealed their own baseness.

“It was on this occasion that I gained a glimpse into the true nature of the third Ordinary of St. Paul when I unexpectedly found myself in the role of Elmar in Weber's *Dreihnlinden*, whom the poet quotes as saying to the old Saxon Diethelm: '*Weinst du gar? Es is so bitter, alte Augen weinen sehen!*' (In the translation by M.A. Muegge, published in Great Britain under the title *Corvey Abbey*: 'Diethelm, do not weep! An old

man's tears are painful to behold!') In that hour I sat opposite a great man different from the one the world knows from the days of storm and stress. And I keep that picture in reverent memory. –

* * *

“The annual convention of the Central Verein in August, 1915, marked a climax in the relations between Archbishop Ireland and the national organization of German-American Catholics. His Grace seemed determined to do his utmost to show his confidence and esteem. The official report of the convention records the words of praise and encouragement spoken by him publicly. But his sentiments were probably best illustrated in a private arrangement. On the second day of the convention His Grace had as his guests at dinner in the old residence on Portland Avenue executive officers of the Central Verein who, in an atmosphere of exquisite friendliness, had an opportunity to discuss intimately matters of Catholic concern with their host and the Papal Delegate Archbishop, later Cardinal, Bonzano, one of the staunchest friends the Central Verein ever had. The guests were Honorary President Nicholas Gonner, of Dubuque; President Joseph Frey, of New York; Vice President Michael F. Girten, of Chicago; Secretary John Q. Juenemann and George N. Gerlach, chairman of the Convention committee, of St. Paul; Recording secretary August Springob, of Milwaukee; Mr. F.P. Kenkel, and myself.

“After the convention Mr. Kenkel and I could greet the Archbishop once more when we met him unexpectedly while we were at the Seminary as the guests of Fr. Wm. Busch.”

* * *

Whatever happened to Monsignor H.B. Sandmeier of New Ulm that made Archbishop Ireland weep? One can find nothing about the priest, except that he was the founding pastor of Holy Trinity Church in New Ulm – now Holy Trinity Cathedral. When Archbishop Ireland went to New Ulm in 1911 to Fr. Sandmeier's parish for a confirmation, he had 700 confirmands!

* * *

In 1909, the St. Paul Catholic Historical Society published a trove of documents on the early pioneer priests of the Diocese of St. Paul, including the obituaries of the first missionaries to serve in the region. Among those fascinating pioneer priests was Fr. Joseph Goiffon, who died on May 6, 1910 in Hugo, Mn., and whose Funeral Mass was presided over by Archbishop Ireland.

Fr. Goiffon was born in France in on March 3, 1824, was ordained on June 2, 1852, and after several years in parish work in his homeland, applied to work in the Diocese of St.

Paul, which he joined in 1857.

Here is a snip from his death notice, on the misadventure he encountered while on a 500-mile horseback ride to say Mass for a small prairie community in North Dakota:

“...On the third of November he was caught in a blizzard on the open prairie, exposed to all the fury of the storm. He dismounted, removed the saddle from his weary horse, and made a hollow in the snow in which he placed it to serve as a bed. Then covering himself in his buffalo skin he went to sleep. He remained in that position throughout the following day. On the third day, when he attempted to arise, he found that his feet were frozen. He dragged himself towards his horse, which was lying on the ground a short distance away, only to learn that he had succumbed to the intense cold. To assuage the pangs of hunger he cut some flesh from the body of his dead horse and ate it with relish. Then covering himself with his robe he recommended himself to God and his Guardian Angel and went to sleep. On the fifth day the storm abated. His feeble cries for help were heard by a couple of travelers who happened to pass that way ; and he was taken to the home of Joseph Rolette in Pembina. His frozen limbs soon began to mortify, and in order to save his life he was removed to St. Boniface, Man., where, on December 3, his right limb was amputated just below the knee. He was too weak to stand a similar operation on the left foot — so weak, indeed, that preparations were made for his death. The Sisters began to prepare tallow candles for the wake: the tallow took fire and soon the Archbishop's house, in which the patient lay, was a mass of flames which in a short time communicated themselves to the adjoining Cathedral. Father Goiffon was rescued with difficulty from the burning building, which, together with the Cathedral, was reduced to ashes....

“To the surprise of all he began to recover and on January 6, 1861, his left foot was amputated. On June 7 he returned to St. Joseph and resumed his missionary labors. By the aid of a stout stick and a wooden leg which he whittled from the branch of a tree, he continued to move about in the fulfillment of his pastoral duties until the following September, when Bishop Grace paid a visit to the Red River district and on his return to St. Paul brought Father Goiffon with him....”

And Fr. Goiffon served as a parish priest almost till the end of his long life.

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In Part XIII of “A Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota,” published January 11, 1951, Joseph Matt considers Archbishop John Ireland's suspicion – and disapproval – of Catholic lay action.

* * *

“There were several contradictions in the attitude of Archbishop Ireland toward lay societies and organizations. One of them I discussed in an earlier article, namely, the stern repudiation of the activities of the German-American Priests' Society in the Katholikentage and in the Catholic Central Verein in contrast to the warm expressions of confidence and praise bestowed by him on the Catholic laity. Another contradiction, although somewhat veiled, may be found in the restrictions he placed upon lay organizations. Whilst he assured them of his approval and confidence, he insisted on a 'close attention to their own legitimate business,' – a course which, according to his deliberate indictment of the Priesterverein, was endangered by ambitious designs of their spiritual leaders.

“Today, in the era of Catholic Action, it makes an interesting study to search for the reasons of this contrary attitude. The late Archbishop apparently had in mind something like Catholic Action today. But he regarded the organized laity, not as an organic entity of Catholic social life, but as being restricted to the limited sphere of the parish and definitely confined to its own primitive objectives, sick benefits and life insurance, etc. Beyond this scope, according to the ideas of Archbishop Ireland in the Eighties and Nineties, lay organizations were prohibited to undertake anything on their own initiative. In support of this contention, he referred to his letter to Fr. Casimir Hueppe (quoted in preceding articles) to ecclesiastical rules under which the public gatherings and pronouncements in the interest of religion could only take place 'with the previously received assent and under the guidance of the Hierarchy,' otherwise such gatherings would 'occupy ground, primarily, and by divine appointment, belonging in the Catholic Church to the Bishops, “whom the Holy Ghost has placed to rule the Church of God”!’

“Loyal Catholics everywhere and at all times readily recognized, as a matter of course, the Bishop's authority and were fully aware of the hierarchical order of the Church. The mere fact that the Chaska convention had expressly asked the Archbishop for his approval clearly demonstrated that there was no intention of deviating from discipline and usurping ecclesiastical prerogatives. Archbishop Ireland, however, made an issue of the situation and, in effect, formulated a new decree which tended to contain, if not stifle, lay activity. It appears that, in insisting on lay organizations strictly confining to diocesan boundaries and supervision, he anticipated efforts emerging many years later in connection with the application of the general principles of Catholic Action. In the light of past experiences with lay organizations gone astray, and particularly in our age of instability and shiftiness, it is, of course, of vital importance to give circumspect guidance to societies and organizations. But mere paper organizations, no matter how painstakingly mapped out, are not the answer. 'The letter killeth, it is the spirit giveth life.' It undoubtedly was this consideration which a few years ago caused the Conference of American Bishops to grant the Central Verein a mandate in the field of Catholic

Action [in 1936].

“Archbishop Ireland later also disapproved of the American Federation of Catholic Societies, although members of the Hierarchy were among its founders and leaders. This attitude toward lay organizations was all the more surprising since, on many occasions, he emphasized the necessity of virile Catholic laity, stating that laymen who occasionally blunder are preferable to those who too complacent or too disinterested to risk a mistake.

“But he apparently always had in mind a definitely circumscribed program of action which would prevent the laity from placing the Church in a 'false' light before public opinion – not necessarily by compromising and discrediting the Church. In his struggle for the conciliation of modern Society with the Church, the Archbishop at all times tried eagerly to avoid rousing and strengthening prejudices of non-Catholics and non-Christians by an unequivocal statement of the Catholic attitude, following therein the example of his French prototypes from Bossuet to Lacordaire, Brunetiere, etc. Their tendency was quite correctly described by M. Brunetiere himself when he wrote of Bossuet: 'He was convinced that it was of the greatest moment not indeed to – in the phrase of our own day – “minimize” the demands of the Catholic verity, but at all event not to exaggerate those demands; and, therefore, 1. to make to Protestant opinion every concession which a rigorous orthodoxy would permit; and 2. not to add anything, on the other hand, to a creed more than one difficulty of which was already repelling the Protestants.'

“The Archbishop, cautioning Catholics, frequently used the phrase, 'Let sleeping dogs lie.' Heeding, on his part, this slogan, he was careful not to take a stand in regard to secret societies. He could, for instance, not be persuaded to make a statement which might have clarified the situation when our courts rendered a superficial and unfair decision against the Catholic Aid Association of Minnesota – voiding a provision of its constitution which denied membership to members of secret societies. Formally to oppose secret societies was not compatible with his irenic endeavors. For many years, until Pope Leo XIII very diplomatically elicited a declaration from him, the solemn resolutions of our Katholikentage and the Central Verein demanding the restoration of the Patrimony of St. Peter, the Papal States, found little favor with him, because many Americans considered the temporal power of the Pope to be contrary to 'democratic' ideas. The attitude of the Katholikentage (and the German-American Priest's Society) in regard to the School question and other controversial ideas of the day was even less in harmony with 'the opinions which some comprised under the head of Americanism' (*Testem benevolentiae*).

“It was undoubtedly for these reasons that Archbishop Ireland, censuring in particular the 'Clerical Union,' rejected a 'tribunal' whose 'judgments,' reflecting ideas not popular

in America, were apt to influence public opinion unfavorably toward the Church. The positive good, for members of the Church and the position of the Church itself, almost seemed to be a matter of subordinate consideration. I do not wish to imply, of course, that he willfully overlooked such important factors. But the fact is that only after many years of observation and experience – and after bitter controversies! – did he learn to evaluate the importance of language and national tradition in the religious life of Catholic immigrants. He insisted that seminarians learned as far as possible the language of their future parishioners. (There was even a German literary society in the St. Paul Seminary; I lectured there more than once.) It is also true that, at Confirmations and on similar occasions, he encouraged members of 'foreign language' parishes to retain their mother tongue. But he realized only in his later years that more was at stake than pastoral expediency, – that the immigrants, besides their religion, possessed in their language and their national characteristics a unifying bond which contributed immensely to the fostering and strengthening of the religious life in parishes. These 'national' parishes, precisely because of their peculiar characteristics, were – although in varying degrees, of course – a closely knit unit, and a living organism with a multitude of functions, – in religious matters under the guidance of parish priests who were not only spiritual shepherds but also friends and advisers of the families, while the flourishing societies and other coordinated agencies reached deep into the social and private life of every member of the community. It was on these premises and under such circumstances that these parishes and their societies, together with a Catholic press of the type of *The Wanderer*, *Amerika*, *Waisenfreund*, etc., which was actually an integral part of this organism, exercised an influence which amazes students of history. Of course, I speak of conditions in exemplary parishes, and am fully aware of the fact that there were also shortcomings and difficulties of every kind. But it would be easy to name dozens of parishes whose remarkable achievements in the difficult pioneer days are a challenge to the present generation – even some of the parishes I have in mind.

“In later years, after the controversies on the nationality question, 'Cahenslyism,' etc., had subsided, and after the Catholic congresses charted along hierarchical lines had failed to come up to expectations, Archbishop Ireland apparently became reconciled to a more comprehensive program of lay activities and readily accepted and encouraged the services of the State Federation of German Catholic Societies in opposing legislative measures dangerous to Catholic interests and in supporting movements for the general welfare.

“We American Catholics of today probably would find ourselves in a much more favorable position to make our influence felt, if those modest beginnings of unified Catholic action would have been carefully fostered and consistently developed. If that important spadework performed by pioneer parishes and societies would not have been neglected we probably would be less helpless and best by problems at a time when self-help and other manifestations of a sound democracy are being stifled by the bramble-

bush of bureaucracy and the Catholic laity, too, is enmeshed in haphazard and picayune officiousness. And we probably could meet with greater success the challenge of our times, the progressive secularization of our public life, the enslavement and corruption of ideas by unprincipled press, radio and television monopolies, and the whole rubbish of nightclub and Hollywood 'culture.'

“But in those important formative years of our adolescent American culture many opportunities were relegated or sadly neglected. Much promising seed went to waste. Some, of course, had no depth of earth and soon withered away. Some was choked by thorns. Some was trodden down in the quarrels of words and ideas. Some was eaten up – not by birds of the air but by the gophers of Liberalism and the moles of Secularism. *Testem benevolentiae* was never accorded the appreciation befitting that important document. It was, by way of false apologetics, by bold assertions and innuendoes, partly talked to death, partly enshrouded in complacent silence as if a misinformed Pope had condemned and tried to clarify obtuse ideas which only existed in the fertile imagination of some Frenchman and later, 'over there' were resurrected in the shape of Modernism – of which we in America, of course, hardly knew more than the name!

“It would be a grave injustice to deny that, with the grace of God, America has become a land of great and glorious achievements. But whenever we feel the temptation to look down upon the poor publicans of other countries, it is well to remember the greater opportunities showered on us, and to ponder on the neglect and omissions of a former period, and to draw from the lessons of the past salutary resolutions for the present and the future.”

* * * *

Speaking of Pope Leo XIII's encyclical letter *Testem benevolentiae*, here is the text of the letter Archbishop Ireland sent to the Holy Father after it was received by Cardinal Gibbons, who forwarded it to the rest of the U.S. episcopacy, as published in the *New York Times*, March 12, 1899.

Headlined, in caps: “IRELAND TO THE POPE.” with the subhead, “Text of the Archbishop's Letter in Acknowledgment of the Pronouncement on 'Americanism.’” the report reads:

“Copies of the *Osservatore Romano*, containing the full text of the letter which Archbishop Ireland addressed to the Pope in acknowledgment of the latter's pronouncement upon 'Americanism,' have been received in this city. This newspaper is considered to be in especial favor with the Vatican, and is conceded to be, in a certain sense, the official organ of the Sovereign Pontiff. It is understood also that Archbishop Ireland's letter was printed in that paper at the immediate instance of the Holy See. The

text of the letter is in the French language, the full translation of which is as follows, and is published for the first time in this country:

“Most Holy Father: Immediately on reading the letter which your Holiness has just addressed to His Eminence, Cardinal Gibbons, and to the other members of the American Episcopate, I hasten to thank your Holiness for this act of esteem and love toward the Catholics of the United States, as well as our entire American Nation.

“New light has come, misunderstandings are no more. Now we can even define the errors which 'certain ones' have wished to cloak with the name of 'Americanism' and define the truth which alone Americans call 'Americanism.'

“Moreover, so clear and precise are the distinctions and explanations given in the Apostolic Letter that the danger which was not understood by all the people of the United States -- a danger which I myself, I confess, did believe might arise -- is no longer possible.

“Seeing the astonishing confusion of ideas and the subsequent controversies started, especially in France, about the book, *Vie du Pere Hecker*, the extent of which can be measured by the Apostolic Letter, I can no longer be blind to the fact that it was a necessity for the chief pastor to raise his voice to enlighten and pacify men's minds.

“Assuredly, with all the strength of my soul, I repudiate and I condemn every opinion which the Apostolic Letter repudiates and condemns, all those false and dangerous opinions which, as the letter says, 'certain persons give the name of Americanism.' I repudiate and condemn those opinions without any exception, literally, as your Holiness repudiates and condemns them, and I repudiate and condemn them with all the greater readiness and heartfelt joy because my Catholic faith and my understanding of the teaching and practices of the holy Church never for a single instant permitted me to open my soul to such extravagances.

“The whole episcopate of the United States, in their own names and in the names of their people, are ready to repudiate and condemn those errors.

“We cannot but be indignant that such an injury has been done to us -- to our Bishops, to our faithful people, to our Nation, in designating by the word 'Americanism,' as certain ones have done, such errors and extravagances as these.

“Most Holy Father, it is the enemies of the Church in America and the faithless interpreters of the faith who imagine that there exists or who desire to establish in the United States a church differing in one iota from the holy and universal Church which others recognize and which Rome itself, infallible guardian of the revelation of Jesus Christ, recognizes or can recognize.

“Begging your Holiness graciously to accept this expression of the sentiment of my love and devotion, and to bestow upon me the favor of the Apostolic blessing, I have the honor to be your Holiness's devoted son,
John Ireland,
Archbishop of St. Paul”

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In Part XIV of “A Centenary of Catholic Life in America,” Joseph Matt described the intensity of the conflict between the “Americanists” in the U.S. Church and their opponents, primarily German-American Catholics, and how the “Americanists” deftly politicized an intra-Church issue by inserting their anti-German propaganda in the secular press.

“Some readers may have been startled by the concluding paragraph of the preceding article,” wrote Matt in the January 18, 1951 edition of *The Wanderer*, recalling the years of “stress and storm” in his early years as editor of *Der Wanderer*, “in which the language and nationality conflict was brought into close association with the 'Americanism' condemned by Leo XIII on January 22, 1899. However, this interrelation is a fact, not a mere theory.

“Anyone familiar with the history of the controversies of the Eighties and Nineties of the past century, basing his opinions on historical facts and not on loosely connected episodes and slogans and romantic and sentimental panegyrics – knows that we have to deal with a ramified and coordinated movements whose centripetal currents uniformly revolved around the basic idea of the reconciliation of modern society with the Church. Whatever seemed to strengthen and enhance this basic idea was incorporated into a progressive ideology which gradually developed into a system – with the final result that Pope Leo, in his breve *Testem benevolentiae*, found it necessary to warn against 'the suspicion that there are some among you who conceive and desire a Church in America different from that which is in the rest of the world.'

“It is obvious to every objective writer that without grave reasons such a sentence would not have appeared in a highly important document. These reasons, however, cannot be established by search in the explanations and comments published by exponents of 'Americanism' after the promulgation of the breve: rather, they must be found in the innovations and controversies which preceded it and, in the opinion of the Holy See, made a clarification necessary. While the language and nationality conflict was not directly drawn into the condemnation of 'Americanism' – which concerned itself chiefly

with theological questions – it nevertheless comes indirectly under the stricture against 'modern popular theories and methods' that endeavored to win favor with non-Catholics by over-emphasizing American and patriotic features of the Church.

“Anyone conversant with the controversy literature of those days frequently is confronted with psychological riddles. Whilst enemies of the Church – Freemasons, Freethinkers and Liberals of all hues – were handled with amazing forbearance and leniency, members of the Faith who dared to hold and express opinions not in accord with the new ideology were called to order with shocking unkindness and exposed to the ridicule and 'patriotic' wrath of friend and foe. A typical example in this regard is a pamphlet written by the Rev. George Zuercher of Buffalo who has been mentioned in these columns before. Its revealing title is, *Foreign Ideas in the Catholic Church in America*; it was published in East Aurora, N.Y., by a non-Catholic concern, the publishers of *The Philistine*, which advertised itself as a 'periodical of protest' 'calculated to lay the dust of convention and drive out the miasma of degeneracy,' and as 'assailing the old gods.' But the most shocking of all are the vehement abuses of the German Catholics in official documents. Bishop Richard Gilmont of Cleveland, for example, wrote on December 26, 1886, verbatim:

“...I declare, without fear of contradiction, that it is false to say that the Germans have been neglected. On the contrary, I affirm that the Germans receive more favors than their talents or their number demand. If it were not for the great patience of the English-speaking Catholics, they would already have resisted, to the effusion of blood, the egotism and the menacing advances of the Germans. If Rome imposes on us special legislation in favor of the Germans [by granting certain petitions of Archbishop Heiss in Milwaukee, which will be discussed later], a war of races will be inevitable, and in this war – it is well to call attention to it – the Catholics of the English language will have on their side the sympathies of the whole American people....’

“The Bishop of Cleveland, on the second Christmas day of 1886, on the eve of the feast of the Disciple of Love, apparently was not in a Christmas mood. His irate words, however, together with other invectives, were inserted in the memorial signed by Bishop Ireland of St. Paul and Bishop Keane of Richmond, *Relatio de Questione Germanica in Statibus Foederatis*, etc., 1886.

“In his book, *La Situation Religieuse aux Etats-Unis*, Jules Tardivel introduces the chapter on the Nationality Question with the words '*J'aborde maintenant des questions plus delicates* – I now approach most delicate questions.'

“Although a half century has passed since the publication of M. Tardivel's book (Montreal 1900), a frank discussion of the controversies waged in the last decades of the nineteenth century is still a delicate matter beset with difficulties. For, although some of

the problems involved have lost much of their former actuality and may therefore be discussed from the historic point of view, the personality of the men who played leading roles in those bitter conflicts imposes certain restrictions – which, however, cannot be permitted to interfere with historical truth. Truth is not always pleasant, but, as a Greek writer has expressed it, '*Amicus Plato, magis amica veritas* – I love Plato, but the truth I love more.'

“The first formal manifesto in the nationality and language question emanated from St. Louis. The Archbishop of St. Louis, believing that, according to the Council of Trent, two parishes could not exist in the same territory, in 1842 designated the churches in which the English language was used as parochial, and those using other languages as succursal (*Ecclesia succursales*, or *Sacella commoditatis*, Chapels of Ease). The ancient regulation had long since been forgotten but in 1884, was resurrected and published in the press ('dug out of the dust by a priest of superficial judgment, an eternal troublemaker,' as Archbishop Corrigan wrote, probably referring to the Rev. David Phelan). Thereupon, on July 31, 1884, eighty-two priests of the secular and regular clergy of St. Louis, in a petition submitted to Cardinal Simeoni, Prefect of the Propaganda, asked for a clarification of the status of their parishes and of their own status. They said in their (Latin) petition:

“The statute of (1842) was entirely unknown to nearly all the undersigned; and those few who knew of it considered it entirely obsolete. Since, however, the statute, without evident authorization, has recently been republished in newspapers, several pastors of English-speaking parishes have frequently conducted themselves as the rectors of German Catholics, although the Archbishop is said to be displeased with such an application of the statute. Deplorable experiences show that such an ecclesiastical status is dangerous and disastrous for Catholic Germans entrusted to our pastoral care, and humiliating and intolerable for ourselves (as explained in an article in *Pastoralblatt* included in the memorial in a French translation)....Judging from different indications we deem the fear justified that this arrangement, perilous to the care of souls, may become firmly established, be extended beyond this diocese, and even be sanctioned or at least tolerated by the coming Third Plenary Council. Therefore, we beg Your Eminence to deign to make provisions, either by instructions to those concerned or otherwise as the wisdom of Your Eminence may see fit, so that Catholics not using the English language be not deprived of a well regulated pastoral care and that their rectors, because of the language of their parishioners, be not denied the rights conceded to pastors using the English language.'

“On October 2, 1885, Bishop Gilmour of Cleveland and Bishop Moore of St. Augustine presented to Cardinal Simeoni a *Memoriale sulla Questione dei Tedeschi*, concerning the German Question in America. Said the memorial:

“Where the Germans are in sufficient numbers to form parishes, and maintain priests and schools, their course is irreproachable and should be upheld...But where the number of Germans is small, and where they must go to the same church with Irish, French or other nationalities, the difficulty is great. In such cases the Germans demand absolutely that the priest and the school should be German. To keep the peace with the Germans, injustice is often done to other nationalities. In such circumstances the Irish usually submit, while the French generally cease going to church. The number of German priests is far greater than than the number of German Catholics requires. In the Provinces of Cincinnati and Milwaukee there are seventeen bishops, of whom nine are German and only one Irish, whilst at least half of the Catholic population in these two Provinces is Irish. Efforts have been made to remedy this injustice. Irish priests were placed on the lists of candidates for the vacant bishoprics of Nashville, Covington, and Grand Rapids. They were at the head of the lists, but in every case a German priest – the last on the list – was chosen...’ (*Foreign Ideas in the Catholic Church in America*, p.2-3).

“Bishop Gilmour's Christmas homily in regard to the Milwaukee petition of 1886 was quoted in a preceding paragraph. Bishop Moore who in 1885, in the memorial submitted by him in conjunction with Bishop Gilmour, confessed his annoyance because of the great number of Bishops of German nationality, in his protest against the Milwaukee petition, 'cites a document upon this same subject, which he and the Bishop of Cleveland, when they were in Rome two [?] years ago, found necessary to present to His Eminence, the Cardinal Prefect of the Propaganda.' He now sees that these efforts to prevent the movements of certain German ecclesiastics were not only opportune but extremely necessary, and he again appeals to that exposition of the facts. He continues: 'Deliberate efforts are now being made to introduce into the Catholic Church at home the spirit of nationalism; a sad conflict will result therefrom; religion and piety will suffer, and the Catholics of all nationalities will become ridiculous in the eyes of the entire people of the United States. I am convinced that this attempt of the Germans to form themselves into a distinct and nationalist church [!] will be more harmful to the Catholic religion in our country than the renewal of the Know-Nothing war would be. (The Know-Nothings attacked the Church 30 years ago as an organization foreign to our county and to its national spirit),’” *Relatio de Questione Germanica*, etc. 1886, p.59.

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“The petition of the St. Louis priest and the memorial of the Bishops Gilmour and Moore had no immediate official consequences. Hardly anything was known of them in public; and as far as the second of these documents is concerned, it seems that Bishop Moore's reference to it was the first public announcement of its existence. In marked contrast to this unpretentious overture, the following acts of the drama were replete with martial fanfare motifs and sensational pyrotechnics. The first of these acts was introduced by a petition submitted to the Propaganda Congregation in November, 1886,

by Father (later Monsignor) P. Abbelen with the approbation of Archbishop Michael Heiss of Milwaukee. The contents of the document were essentially the same as those of the St. Louis petition of two years before, asking for the clarification of the canonical status of parishes using the German language and of the pastors of these parishes, and making several suggestions to relieve certain tensions among Catholics of different nationalities. (Details of the document will be presented in subsequent issues.)

“The casual reader of today is at a loss to understand why this petition should have caused such a tremendous sensation. Being written in Latin, it was not meant for public discussion. It was, as to tone, purport and practical objectives, in harmony with Catholic thought and canonical law, – a fact which was confirmed when the Holy See – and a number of dioceses in their own right – eventually acceded to most of the requests presented in the Milwaukee petition.

“Under normal conditions the general public would have heard little or nothing of the negotiations going on in the customary manner between the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith and the Milwaukee Ordinary. Nor was this ecclesiastical matter in any way within the competence of public law or public opinion! The Ordinaries undoubtedly would have been notified at the proper time and would have had an opportunity to give their assent or express disapproval. Instead of awaiting developments along these conventional lines, the exponents of 'Americanism,' establishing the first precedent of this kind since the days of the disastrous Trustee conflict at the beginning of the nineteenth century, dragged a question of unquestionable ecclesiastical jurisdiction into the forum of public opinion and, with the aid of the secular press and every means of propaganda, pleaded for the independence of the Church in America from 'foreign' influences.

“The attacks on the Archbishop of Milwaukee and those sharing his views were the prelude to the Cahensly scandal a few years later. In both cases the monstrous accusation was raised that 'the German party' planned to 'Germanize' the Catholic Church in America as well as the entire country.

“Msgr. Abbelen was a man of unimpeachable character and a sound theologian 'who had rendered good and faithful services at the Plenary Council' (Cardinal Gibbons, *Relatio*, p. 51). Of Archbishop Heiss, Msgr. Rainer wrote in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* (vol. X, p. 319): 'Archbishop Heiss was known and esteemed as one of the most learned theologians of the country, a reputation which secured to him a place among the members of the dogmatic commission at the Vatican Council. His works....hold a prominent place in theological literature. In 1883 he was invited to Rome to take part in the deliberations preparatory to the Third Plenary Council at Baltimore, which he also attended....’”

“In Milwaukee, which in those days was preponderantly German, the German language and German science naturally were held in high esteem. But the outstanding men in the Catholic camp were decidedly not of the nationalist type. Even the Rev. J. Gmeiner (he died as pastor of St. Augustine's parish in South St. Paul), who as professor at St. Francis, in a pamphlet, *Are German Catholics Unfairly Treated?*, stressed nationalistic trends among German-Americans did not dare to impute similar leanings to the Catholic leaders in Milwaukee. The fact is that the biographies of *A Noble Priest* (Dr. Salzmann), Mother Caroline Fries, etc., bear witness to the continuous struggles of the German Catholic pioneers of Milwaukee with the powerful element of Liberalistic and radical persuasion. There was no trace of weak-kneed compromise nor flirting with popular acclaim. I have before me the *Acta et Decreta* of the First Provincial Council of Milwaukee held in 1886 and presided over by Archbishop Heiss. The Decree dealing with Secret Societies condemns not only Freemasonry and affiliated sects but also all secret societies affected by the general decrees of the Church, including the German Turners: 'Hinc dubium non est quin Communistae, Socialistae, Anarchistae et illi Tornatores (Turners), qui associati sunt foederi vulgo 'Turnerbund' vocato, excommunicationis censura ligentur' (p.50).

“Indeed, the Milwaukee prelates were not nationalists and Germanization fanatics!

“And it was an act of distributive justice when, in 1899, in the words of Leo XIII, the reproach of nationalistic tendencies fell back upon their accusers.”

* * *

Worth remembering: Throughout the late Eighties and through the Nineties of the 19th century, *Der Wanderer's* editor Hugo Klapproth and his able correspondents in the U.S. and Europe led the fight against “Americanism” which eventually led to Pope Leo's *Testem benevolentiae*. After the encyclical was signed by the Pope on January 22, 1899, the U.S. bishops withheld its release for a month as they sought to stay it. Throughout March, April and May – after Klapproth translated the Latin into German for *Der Wanderer's* readers, Klapproth commented extensively upon it, observing, in particular, how the “Americanists” insisted there was no “Americanism.” On June 7, 1899, Klapproth announced his retirement from *Der Wanderer* and turned the editorship over to his under-study, 22-year-old Joseph Matt, who would remain editor for 66 years.

###

In Part XV of a “Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota” Joseph Matt provides details on the “memorial” Milwaukee priest Fr. Peter Abbelen sent to the Congregation Propaganda Fide in November 1886, with the approval of Archbishop Michael Heiss, on the subordinate status of German Catholic priests and parishes in the American Church.

Until 1908, the United States was considered by Rome “mission territory” and the U.S. Church was under the care of Propaganda, which had the responsibility for settling disputed questions that arose in the territory.

When the Abbelen letter became public knowledge, it blew the “German Question” onto the front pages of leading American newspapers, heightening tensions between English-speaking and German-speaking Catholics. Ironically, at the same time of the Abbelen letter, Archbishop Ireland and Bishop John Keane were in Rome, hoping to seek papal approval for the establishment of the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., an institution opposed by Archbishop Michael Corrigan of New York and Rochester's Bishop Bernard McQuaid, who referred to CUA as “this abortion,” a captive of “Southern bishops, priests and laymen.”

* * *

“The complete history of the Milwaukee petition is presented in *Relatio de Queastione Germanica*, the memorial we have mentioned repeatedly,” wrote Matt. “The full title, translated from the original Latin into English, is as follows: 'Report on the German Question in the United States: Written by the Rev. P. M. Abbelen, priest of the diocese of Milwaukee; Approved by the Most. Rev. M. Heiss, Archbishop of Milwaukee; and Submitted to the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide, in November 1886. – Followed by the Objections of the Most. Rev. Bishops Presented to the Same Congregation and Translated from the French into the English Language.' (Name and address of the Printer, and/or Publisher, are not given.)

“The document, which very likely has been preserved in but a few copies gathering dust in archives and libraries, is from more than one point of view an important contribution to the history of the Church as well as the cultural history of our country in general. If all those trying to foster knowledge and a deeper understanding of the past had made use of such sources, – many an unfair and unjustifiable accusation would have remained unwritten and unspoken; many a foolish assertion still to be found in popular fiction and 'scientific' publications would long since be dead and buried; many a misunderstanding would have been clarified, and many a valuable lesson would have been gained in the avoidance of wrong and detrimental methods, which an unbiased examination will detect in both camps of the conflicts of the past. But let the document of 1886 speak for itself!

“Father Abbelen, according to my own translation of the original Latin text, writes in the introduction: 'I have drawn up the petition dispassionately and from the best of motives, and submitted it to the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide which has graciously received it. If the Sacred Congregation should defer the definition of the questions at issue, or even render a less favorable decision, it should be attributed, not to

disinterestedness or aversion on the part of the Sacred Congregation, but to the opposition of those who differ from us on the matter, believing that the expositions in this document are not always entirely in conformity with the truth, and that the petitions which are being submitted involve special privileges rather than equal rights. But the presentation of facts contains nothing but the truth as far as I established it from my own observations as well as from information received from others, and in formulating the petitions I had nothing in mind but a just equalization. Even if each and every one of our petitions will be granted, we, in my opinion, will not receive any prerogatives over against others. But judge for yourselves!

“There is nothing farther from my mind than to arouse or suggest a public controversy. If, therefore, somebody should find some error in the exposition or some unfairness in the petition, he should, if he believes me to be worthy of it, send his objections directly to me.

“If I have erred, I shall not refuse to be corrected. Love of the Church and the salvation of souls shall also in this matter be the supreme law! It may well be to add that I alone am the author of this document. Therefore, if it should have caused anger, this should turn solely against me. I had been requested time and again in the past eight months to go to Rome in this matter. Complying with these requests, I wrote this document before my departure and put it before as many priests and bishops as the shortness of time permitted, and all of them considered the presentation of facts truthful and accurate and the petitions just and opportune. The Most Rev. Archbishop of Milwaukee gave his approval orally as well as by affixing his signature. Nevertheless, I once more take upon myself everything I wrote and if should have displease, kindly grant me forgiveness and do not blame others.’

* * *

“In the introductory chapter of the memorial, its contents and purpose are set forth by Fr. Abbelen as follows:

“1. The question at issue is the relation of non-English parishes to English parishes, in the first place, therefore the relation of German parishes to Irish parishes in the United States of America.

“2. We petition the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide to define that relation in the sense that German parishes be entirely independent of Irish parishes and equal to them, so that the pastors of Irish parishes be not allowed to exercise any parochial rights in regard to Germans who are, or by right should be, entered as members of a German parish, whether they have immigrated or were born in America of German parishes.

“3. We ask for this independence and equalization because they are denied us in many instances...’ After having given details of conditions in a number of dioceses – among others in St. Louis, where the German priests, as recorded in last week's article, had complained in 1884 –, the memorial continued:

“The opinion prevails almost everywhere that the Irish rectors are the real and rightful pastors of all those born in America and have some kind of supreme supervision over them, and that the German priests, while necessary for the pastoral care of Germans as long as these use the German language, become superfluous when in the course of time – the sooner the better – their parishioners, having learned English, discard the German; that German parishes, therefore, have a transitory ecclesiastical status and there there should be not equalization of the German parishes. There are also others who believe it to be against canon law to have in the same district two parishes, independent from one another, and that for this reason too the English church should be the only parish church.

“4. From various and serious reasons, it appears therefore that this status of dependency and subordination should be abolished and complete independence and equalization established.’

“Among the reasons in favor of equality among the parishes of all nationalities, Fr. Abbelen's petition cited the fact that under the American Constitution equal rights are enjoyed by all citizens, 'naturalized' Americans being excluded only from the privilege of becoming President. Why, then, should there be any differentiation in Church law 'among children of the same Mother,' as if some of them were less welcome and less close to her heart?

“With the introduction of this argument, the tone of the memorial becomes more aggressive. One could ask with good reason, Fr. Abbelen wrote, 'whence English Catholics should derive the right of superiority over against non-English Catholics. With the exception of that small number of Catholics who are Americans and have been here for several generations, almost all Catholics using the English language are Irish, immigrants from Ireland and their descendants. They therefore are no less immigrants and no more Americans than the Germans and the other nationalities that immigrated from Europe. Granted that in the Eastern States the Irish are more numerous than the Germans and have arrived before them, – the same cannot be said of the Middle and Western States.' (A footnote explains that the Western States are not those along the Pacific coast, which are usually called Pacific States, but those in the Mississippi River territory, namely Illinois, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, etc.) As far as those are concerned, 'there is no reason by virtue of priority of time or numbers why the Irish should demand prerogatives'....'As early as 1875 the number of German Catholics exceeded a million and a half. In 1881, the number of German priests was 2067, whilst the number of pupils in German parochial schools was nearly equal to that of the

English schools, the respective figures being 117,351 and 117,500 (Sadlier's Directory).'

* * *

“The equalization of the German Catholics, however, was not to be considered merely on the basis of figures. 'Fare be it from me,' Fr. Abbelen wrote, 'to disparage in the slightest manner the faith and the morals of the Irish. On the contrary, I know and gladly admit that they are good and excellent Catholics. But must not the same be said of the Catholic Germans?...' They are indeed not inferior to other nationalities and, everything duly considered, deserve special praise in some instances. They live among fellow countrymen 'many of whom are Protestants, Rationalists, Freethinkers, Freemasons and members of other secret societies,' all of whom are trying everything to win them over to their side. 'But the overwhelming majority withstands all machinations and temptations and with God's help will forever resist them, thus proving themselves to be Catholics worthy of the highest praise....Their churches, schools, and diverse charitable institutions are, as to numbers and size, not inferior to those of other nationalities and not infrequently surpass them. The Orders and Congregations of men and women of German origin occupy a prominent place in the fields of education and charity. The family life of German Catholics and their civic virtues are permeated with a truly Christian spirit...the only Catholic normal school for the education of secular teachers is German. The German Catholics alone have daily papers, five of them. More than 30,000 German men from different States are organized in a federation called the Catholic Central Verein. Almost in every parish flourish benevolent societies which are an effective bulwark against the secret societies. In regard to the cause of Christian education and particularly parochial schools, no one, unless entirely ignorant of the origin and development of these schools, can deny that the present flourishing parochial school system owes its origin to the zeal and perseverance of the German Catholics. Almost nowhere will there be found a German church without its parochial school. And practically all parents sent their children to these schools. There are some who assert that the Germans act in this matter for love of their mother-tongue no less than their love for their Catholic faith. But however that may be, – the fact remains that the Germans very religiously provide for the education of their children.

“The subordination of the German Catholics to the Irish Catholics seems to be unfounded. Compliance with our petition for equalization would violate no right of the Irish, but would free the Germans of an injustice and a humiliation.'

“The memorial then proceeds to argue against objections to an equal rank for the German parishes, examining in the first place the St. Louis statute through which the conflict had been brought into concrete form, and, on the strength of opinions of theologians and canonists, rejecting it as unworkable and detrimental. Subsequent arguments in regard to the importance of the German language in the religious life of

German parishes, of vital actuality sixty-four years ago, today are of only academic interest. The same may be said of Fr. Abbelen's statements on conditions and practices prevalent in Irish and German parishes two generations ago, reflecting differences of historical development and traditions of both nationalities. Whatever our present-day opinion may be of the merits and demerits of these comparisons, presented without rancor or disparagement, – they are interesting as a contribution to the history of a former era.

* * *

“In spite of some irrelevant and disputable phrases, Fr. Abbelen's memorial is a dignified document. It tries to avoid exaggerated assertions as well as extreme demands, and where he seems to have failed in the attempt, allowances must be made in view of the militant conditions of the times (which are even more conspicuous in the replies to this memorial, as we shall see next week).

“Fr. Abbelen pleaded that 'the “Americanization” of the Germans proceed as a gradual and natural process' and that all nationalities within the Church be treated on an equal basis. With these objects in view, the memorial itemized its petitions and proposals as follows:

“In view of these conditions, we petition the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide to define and decide:

“1. That the German (and the other, French, Slav, etc.) parishes shall be equal to the English (Irish) parishes and entirely independent of these; that henceforth no distinction shall be made between either of them as far as parish rights and privileges are concerned.

“2. That, the procedure in the appointment of irremovable rectors shall be in accordance with the conditions laid down by the Council of Baltimore, and that the German parishes shall not be treated as of inferior rank to Irish parishes.

“3. That all immigrants from Europe shall be assigned to the church of their own language wherever such a church exists in their locality, and shall be treated as members of this church; and that the same rule apply to their children born in America, as long as they are under their parental authority.

“4. That the descendants of German families who, being on their own or stemming from a more remote generation, use the English vernacular, be free to transfer to an English church, provided the transfer formal and permanent and takes place with the written consent of the rector or, in case of disagreement, by virtue of an episcopal decision; and

that the same freedom be allowed Irish Catholics who know the German language.

“5. That Bishops and priests shall be admonished, on the one hand, in no wise to seek to suppress and eradicate the language, the habits, customs and worship of the Germans, as long as they are not against the Ten Commandments or the laws, the discipline and rubrics of the Church, and, on the other hand, to favor and promote the English language in the education of youth, particularly in the parochial schools.

“6. That the Bishops be admonished to commit mixed parishes and missions (Irish and German) to priests who know both languages, and impress on their conscience to preach the divine word and teach the children in both languages.

“7. That Bishops of mixed dioceses who are not conversant with the German language, be obligated to appoint, besides the Irish vicar general, also a German vicar general or, if they prefer to have but one vicar general, to appoint one who has also knowledge of the German language.

“8. That, when in the course of time and particularly after immigration ceases, the use of the English language in a church is found to be of greater necessity than the use of German, the rector either at his own initiative or by decision and order of the Bishop introduce the English language; and that, in that case a new division becomes necessary because of the nearness of an English church, such division be made with prudence, fairness and charity.’

“Ecclesiastical decisions in several of the controversial questions were subsequently rendered in accordance with the St. Louis and Milwaukee petitions. The first of these, of June 8, 1887, confirmed equal rights for parishes of different nationalities within the same territory and equal treatment of the parishes in regard to the appointment of irremovable rectors. The proposal that descendants of Germans, as long as they are under parental authority, remain members of the parish of their parents was rejected since parents have the right to send their children to any Catholic school, regardless of the language used there.

“Other controversial questions solved themselves automatically because of changed conditions. The bitter struggle in the last decades of the nineteenth century will, nevertheless, always remain a deplorable chapter in the history of the Church in America.”

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In Part XVI of “A Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota,” published February 1, 1951, Joseph Matt continued his report on the controversial “memorial” submitted to the

Congregation for Propaganda by Fr. Peter Abbelen of Milwaukee.

To provide a little more background on the controversy, consider what Marvin R. O'Connell wrote in his masterful work, *John Ireland & The American Catholic Church*, (Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1988):

“.....The old papal Rome had given way to the capital of the new Kingdom of Italy, and the Pope was seen no more in the streets of what had been his city for a thousand years. Indeed, the Pope was seen hardly at all. The grand liturgical ceremonies Ireland remembered were not held now, for the Pope, cabined up within the walls of the Vatican, removed himself from Roman public life as a way of protesting the aggression that had deprived him of his temporal power. The great doors of St. Peter's Basilica would remain shut up tight, it was said, so long as the King of Piedmont held court in the Quirinal. The papal bureaucracy, crippled by hostile legislation and by the threat and reality of confiscation of its remaining properties, continued nevertheless to function. The vast palazzo of Propaganda still stood on the edge of Piazza de Spagna. Yet Roman ecclesiastics, understandably fearful of anti-clerical agitation, trod more warily than they had used to do.

“But John Ireland in the interval of years had changed, too. No longer the young tourist, wide eyed at the first sight of the splendors of *la citta*, he moved into his quarters at the North American College on the Via dell'Umilta with the brisk, authoritative air of a man of affairs, a middle-aged bishop with important business to attend to. If he felt ill at ease at the presence of another lodger at the college – whose presence indeed had hastened his trip from London – he gave no sign.

“Peter M. Abbelen was a prominent priest of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee who was also well connected in German clerical circles around the country. He had served at the Third Plenary Council as Archbishop [Michael] Heiss's theological adviser. In October 1886 he applied to Cardinal Gibbons for a letter of recommendation to the officials of Propaganda, a letter stating he was a reliable man and 'sufficiently Americanized not to be a one-sided partisan in this question.' The 'question,' he explained, had to do with the legal relationship between national and territorial parishes.....”

Bishop John Keane of Richmond soon joined Ireland at the North American College, where they engaged in a letter-writing campaign to their fellow “English” bishops back in the states, O'Connell wrote, “to flood Propaganda with telegrams and solicited numberless private follow-up letters as soon as possible. 'If you can trust other bishops, give them word, and get them also to send telegrams and letters,' without, however, letting Roman officials know the source of their information.”

Abbelen's visit to Rome, believed Keane and Ireland, was “a conspiracy widespread and

well-organized against English-speaking bishops and priests.”

* * *

Continuing with Joseph Matt's “Centenary”:

“The memorial submitted to the Propaganda Congregation by Fr. Abbelen with the full approval of Archbishop Heiss,” wrote Matt in Part XVI of the “Centenary,” “tersely complained of the subordination imposed upon non-English, particularly German parishes and suggested eight specific measures. Four of these (as recorded last week) aimed at the complete equalization of all parishes, while the rest were meant to relieve existing tensions and establish a *modus vivendi* for the period of transition from the use of the German language to the use of the English language.

“Opinions as to the wisdom and practicability of the proposals, individually as well as a whole, differed sixty-four years ago, and even today, judging the situation in historic perspective, some will be hesitant to endorse all of the eight points in their entirety – particularly the phraseology of proposals 5, 6, 7 (according to which the bishops were to be 'admonished' or 'held' to do to certain things). However, upon a fair and unbiased examination of the document, no one will question the assurance of the author that he honestly strove to put 'love of the Church and the salvation of souls' above any other consideration.

“The Sacred Congregation, by its benevolent attitude and its decisions on some of the main questions, plainly indicated its trust in the good faith of the author and the merits of his case. And subsequent decisions and opinions, as well as changes which in later years, without much ado, were introduced in a number of dioceses on the basis of practical considerations, proved the justice of the complaints made by Fr. Abbelen and his friends in 1886. That holds true precisely in regard to some sections of the memorial which had been denounced most violently, for instance the appointment of German vicar generals and bishops have command of several languages. The Rev. John N. Stariha, who later became Bishop of Lead [S. Dakota, now the Diocese of Rapid City], was appointed vicar general of St. Paul; he spoke English as well as German and his Slovenian mother-tongue. (My files contain important letters in his hand-writing.) Chicago had a German vicar general, Msgr. A.J. Thiele. A German, Dr. Frances Schaefer, became the rector of the St. Paul Seminary, etc.

“Even more significant that these and similar appointments were considerations of nationality and language evident in the selection of bishops and auxiliary bishops. It is a remarkable coincidence that the diocese of Cleveland, whose Ordinary, Bishop Gilmour, was one of the bitterest opponents of Fr. Abbelen and his proposals, was the first to receive an auxiliary selected expressly because of such qualifications. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* (vol. IV, p.57) furnishes the following information: 'A few months before

he died (May 13, 1908) Bishop Ignatius Horstmann [the immediate successor of Bishop Gilmour] asked for an auxiliary bishop with jurisdiction over the growing foreign population, especially of the Slav races, in the diocese. The Rev. Joseph M. Koudelka, rector of St. Michael's Church, Cleveland, was named November 29, 1907, and consecrated [auxiliary of Cleveland and titular Bishop of Germanicopolis] on February 15, 1908, being the first auxiliary bishop of special jurisdiction for the United States.'

“Bishop Koudelka was of Bohemian descent and had served well of his countrymen as editor of *Hlas*, a Bohemian Catholic weekly, and compiler of a series of textbooks for Bohemian Catholic schools. But as the rector of the big German St. Michael's parish he was also closely associated with the endeavors of German Catholics, contributing particularly to the great success of the Central Verein convention in Cleveland in 1908, one of the most important meetings in the history of that organization. He became auxiliary bishop of Milwaukee on September 4, 1911, was appointed bishop of Superior on August 6, 1913, and died June 24, 1921.

* * *

“The letter addressed to Archbishop Ireland by Bishop Moore of St. Augustine on December 28, 1886 (*Relatio*, p.59) conveyed the information that, besides the St. Louis petition of 1884, a memorial on the German Question had been presented to the Propaganda Congregation by Bishop Gilmour jointly with Bishop Moore on October 2, 1885. To all appearances the two bishops during their stay in Rome had acted on their own accord, without deeming it necessary to apprise the American Hierarchy of their action. As far as I know, their secretive procedure, unfriendly to the Germans, did not incur criticism, on the contrary, the reference to their memorial in the protest of Archbishop Ireland and Bishop Keane has all the earmarks of an endorsement. But when Fr. Abbelen, with the approval of Archbishop Heiss, approached the same cardinals' Congregation to plead the interests of the Germans, his action was called an intrigue and a scandal!

“Bishop Gilmour himself wrote of this 'serious menace' in his Christmas letter which I quoted two weeks ago: 'These efforts, being made without our knowledge, show not only a want of tact, but also furnish us with proof that the Germans dare not discuss in America their complaints, which they themselves must acknowledge to be without foundation.' And Bishop Moore protested not only against 'the falsity of the accusations' but also against 'the secret and unworthy manner in which they have been presented to the Holy See.' 'It is a matter,' he wrote, 'too grave to be disposed of in an obscure corner and unknown to us.'

“These sentences of the two authors of the *Memoriale Sulla Questione dei Tedeschi* of 1885, were among the Leitmotifs ringing through the protests against Fr. Abbelen and

his archbishop – completely ignoring, moreover, his plea to hold him alone responsible if his memorial were adjudged to be misguided, objectionable or inopportune.

Accusations were flying thick and fast. The difficulties which had been brought into the open by Fr. Abbelen's petition were laid at the door of a mythical 'German party' in the United States intent on 'Germanizing' the Church in this country by 'secret movements,' 'sinister intrigues,' attempts 'to intimidate the English-speaking Bishops and laity,' etc., etc.

“These and many other indictments were set forth not only in the reply to Fr. Abbelen's petition signed and submitted to the Propaganda by Archbishop Ireland of St. Paul and Bishop Keane of Richmond, but also in dispatches and letters sent to the two prelates who were still in Rome, and later inserted in a supplement to the original protest. Due to the wide publicity given the extremely bitter objections and counter-charges, the dispute no longer remained a strictly ecclesiastical matter but became a topic of sensational reports and discussion in the secular press. Some of the men drawn into the controversy apparently tried to check that development by following Fr. Abbelen's example and presenting their views in Latin, the official language of the Church – whose pithiness makes for precision and does not easily lend itself to propagandistic exploitation.

“Objectivity and moderation were deplorably absent in the vehement attacks on the Milwaukee petition and its author and everyone in sympathy with them. Archbishop Ireland in his later years was painfully conscious of that deficiency, as I can testify on the strength of frequent personal remarks and allusions. In fact, a man of his caliber, serenely looking back upon the bitter quarrels from the realms of mature wisdom and experience could but regret many a word that had been written and spoken in the days of storm and stress of 'Americanism.'

* * *

Fr. Abbelen's petition was presented to the Congregation de Propaganda Fide in November 1886. A few days later, on December 6 of the same year, Archbishop Ireland and Bishop Keane submitted their refutation to the Prefect of the Congregation, Cardinal Simeoni.

“The Propagation of the Propaganda,' the introduction reads, 'will permit us to present a few observations upon the German Question in the United States. As we arrived in Rome, upon the mission to treat with the Propaganda upon the project of the Catholic University, which the Hierarchy of the United States desire to establish at Washington, we were very much surprised to find there a German representative, calling himself the delegate of Bishops and German Catholics in America, and asking in their name legislation altogether novel and exceptional, and of which the effects, we are convinced, would be disastrous to the Church in the United States. The American Bishops of the

English language, and some American Bishops even of the German language, have no knowledge of the presence of this representative in Rome, not of the demands, in their actual form, which he has submitted to the Propaganda. When the knowledge of this secret movement shall have come to them, the Bishop of the United States will be exceedingly indignant. We are convinced that they would never forgive us, if we did not hasten to expose the bad faith of this German party, and to communicate to the Propaganda the sentiments which we know to be those of a very great majority of the American Episcopate.'

“The objections of the two bishops may be divided into 'a few general observations upon the German Catholics in America,' a detailed criticism of the Milwaukee petition, and finally a sharp plea for the counter-charges which reach a climax with the demand that the German conspirators be censured.

“In the general observations, the two prelates take exception to the alleged misrepresentations in Fr. Abbelen's petition when it speaks of the relation 'between the German Catholics and the Irish Catholics.' 'Presented in these terms,' says the reply, 'the question cannot be discussed; it has no existence. The only question that can be considered is this: “The question between the English language, which is the language of the United States, and the German language, which emigrants from Germany have brought to the United States.” Why the Germans so often give to this question another form, as if to indicate that there is a conflict of races in America between the Germans and the Irish, we do not know. But neither the truth nor the justice of the case permits us to accept what they seek to impose upon us. There is in the United States no Irish Church, nor are there any Irish parishes; no efforts are made in the United States to establish an Irish Church, or Irish parishes. What we find in the United States, instead of Irish parishes, are parishes of the English language, which are composed either of Catholics who are not at all of the Irish race, or of Catholics whose ancestors may have been Irish, but who today are, from every point of view, Americans, and they do not wish to be considered Irish; or, again, they may be composed of Catholics born in Ireland, or the immediate descendants of Irish emigrants. Our parishes of the English language are never called Irish parishes. The English-speaking Bishops and priests, of whom a large number are in no respect of the Irish race, have the interests of the Church in the United States too much at heart not to endeavor to eliminate from religious affairs Irish nationalism, and to impress them, as far as circumstances of time and place and sound principles will permit, with an elevated and Catholic character, against which no element, in a very heterogeneous population, could raise any objection. For the rest, let it be said to their praise, the Irish Catholics, even the recent immigrants, do not interpose any serious obstacle to these desires of their religious superiors. Whatever may be their attachment to the land of their birth, they hasten, on arriving in America, to adopt American ideas and manners, and they understand that, in regard to matters of religion, intermingled as they are with other Catholics, speaking like them the English language;

but not like them of the Irish race, they must, for the general good, lay aside their national spirit. The sole question, then, which can be considered, in what regards the English-speaking Bishops and priests in America, is this – the question between the English language and the German language.' (Quoted verbatim from *Relatio de Quaestione Germanica*....Pp. 15 sequ.)

“This interesting distinction and many of the subsequent arguments either ignore completely the petitions and proposals of Fr. Abbelen's memorial, or deal with difficulties not germane to the concrete questions at issue – but conducive to the popularization of the controversy and the prejudication of Fr. Abbelen's case. There are lengthy expositions on the character of the Germans, their arrogance, 'obstinacy and spirit of aggression characteristic of the compatriots of Bismarck,' the intrigues of the 'aggressive German party in America,' the future of the German language in America, 'the strange phenomenon that the official language of a Catholic bishop in an American city is a language foreign to the country,' alleged falsification of figures in regard to the number of German Catholics, the wishes and ambitions of other nationalities in the Church – the French Canadians ('who are exceedingly turbulent'), Poles, Dutch, etc., – the extreme demands of a Bohemian Catholic congress, and, after many more complaints along these lines, the assertion that 'this continued movement of the Germans to arrogate to themselves the entire government of the American Church' will frustrate the hope to make America Catholic – the problem which in the heyday of 'Americanism' was the fundamental principle of strategy in every campaign.”

* * *

A footnote: When Archbishop Ireland and Bishop Keane were in Rome to discuss with Propaganda Fr. Abbelen's memorial, two other big issues were on their agenda for discussion with Roman officials: one was the establishment (and papal recognition) of the Catholic University of America; the other was forestalling a condemnation of the Knights of Labor by the Holy See, at a time of growing labor strife in the United States (exemplified by the Haymarket Massacre in Chicago earlier that year) as workers began organizing to demand an eight-hour work day.

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In Part XVII of “A Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota,” published February 8, 1951, *Wanderer* editor Joseph Matt reveals the deep antipathy St. Paul's Archbishop John Ireland and Richmond Bishop John Keane had for their German co-religionists, “the compatriots of Bismarck” who wanted to hold on to their German language and traditions in their new home in the United States.

Part XVII: “The memorial submitted to the Propaganda Congregation by Archbishop

Ireland and Bishop Keane on December 6, 1886, does not distinguish itself either by well organized and logical presentation or convincing force of argumentation. It is a document with all the earmarks of having been drafted in precipitate haste. A careful study of its contents leaves the reader perplexed because he cannot escape the uncanny impression that the authors were guided by the sole desire to defeat the ideas and proposals presented by Fr. Abbelen and his friends. Accusations – immoderate, bitter, contradictory, repeated in different versions – are hurled at the unfortunate defendant with the animosity of an ill-tempered prosecuting attorney and are nowhere relieved by the slightest attempt at least to admit the possibility of extenuating circumstances.

“Having piled up all their accusations and counter-charges, the two authors come to the conclusion that Fr. Abbelen's petitions and proposals are entirely superfluous since the untoward conditions he wishes to have changed are non-existent in the United States. Therefore, instead of lending dignity to the memorial by giving it serious consideration, Rome should ignore it. 'However wise,' the two bishops warned, 'the decisions may be which the Propaganda may make at this time in regard to this subject, the American bishops will take offense, because they will perceive in such rulings the success of the secret movements of a party.... We pray that the Congregation may not approve these sinister intrigues...' (*Relatio*, p. 36).

“Later a supplementary memorial was submitted – comprising a number of letters and telegrams of American bishops ('without waiting to receive all the protestations of the prelates of the United States, which are arriving day after day') together with a Summary and Conclusion, in which the Milwaukee memorial once more is denounced and the Holy See is urged to censure the sinister attempt to disturb harmony and unity.

“The memorial makes unpleasant reading and may cause readers to wish with me that some day it come to light that the edition of the document, originally written in French, had been assigned to some secretary who imputed to the two bishops his own unfriendly sentiments toward 'the compatriots of Bismarck.' As things stand, however, responsibility rests entirely with the two bishops whose signatures are affixed to the memorial which, moreover, reflects in many ways the animosity known to have been prevalent in high ecclesiastic circles at that time.

* * *

“The authors of the document endeavor, on the one hand, to belittle the importance of the German element in the United States and, on the other hand, to draw a disquieting picture of the dire results for Church and country of the machinations and conspiracies of the leaders of German Catholics. They try to prove that 'the German party' presents unreliable figures on the number of German Catholics, German priests, German parochial schools, etc.; that the vaunted activities of religious Orders of German origin

were carried out at the expense of 'English' Catholics; that there was 'a constant and very decided movement towards the English language among the different nationalities' – an obvious fact denied by no serious observer – which indicated that, once immigration ceased, the language and nationality problem would be eliminated.

“If this problem still continues (in 1886) to be a source of difficulties, it is mainly because 'there exists what we may call the active (German) party whose object seems to be to preserve intact the German spirit among German immigrants and their descendants and....to give a preponderating position to German influence in the Church in America. This is the party of which Fr. Abbelen is not the representative in Rome...' 'We know for certain that among certain German bishops and priests there is a determination, and systematic efforts are made, to extend the German episcopate over America'....'It is openly boasted, to the mortification of other Catholics, that the German cause will be victorious in Rome, and in consequence of this idea, efforts are being made to Germanize the American Church...' 'It is necessary to remind (this German party) that America is not Germany and that there are other Catholics there, besides the Germans.' (All quotations are taken literally from *Relatio*.)

“Fortunately, the memorial says in another place, opposition to these extreme demands is growing in the German camp itself – a 'moderate party, which may be called the German-American party, is opposing the establishment of a permanent Germany in America.' However, on second thought the authors of the memorial almost seem to regret having exonerated a German minority and subsequent passages emphatically reiterate the general condemnations of the German Catholics – laymen, priests, members of religious Orders, bishops. I confine myself to a few characteristic quotations.

* * *

“The complaint is that the Germans have been neglected is not based on facts. 'Whether or not there exists some injustice towards the Germans in some localities, we will not undertake to say. As for us, we know of none.' If in the past the Germans suffered from a scarcity of priests, it was not the fault of the bishops but due to conditions prevailing throughout the country. This is undoubtedly true, but the statements in the very next sentence present a new challenge: 'Until the beginning of the Kulturkampf which compelled many German priests to seek asylum in America, it was a difficult matter for the American bishops to find German priests: those who had come here in consequence of the revolution of 1848 were worthless (the original French is even more derogatory), and no confidence could be placed in them.' The number of priests among the 'Forty-Eighters' was too insignificant (I don't know of any) as to be even mentioned in an official document. It surely would have been more apropos to refer with a few words of praise to the Benedictines and other religious Orders who had come to America long before the Kulturkampf, and, in 1886, for almost a generation had rendered splendid services, for instance in the diocese of St. Paul.

“The increase of the German population and of the number of German priests, according to the memorial, failed to put an end to German complaints. These complaints, however, did not come from the German people from from so-called leaders – ‘from journalists the life of whose papers is dependent on the continuation of the German language, and from certain German priests and prelates who, we may presume, realize that, German as they are to their innermost nature, they would have neither occupation nor power in America, if there ceased to be a permanent Germany in our country.’

“These ‘certain priests and prelates’ are so unbelievably one-sided and shortsighted as to obstruct any concession to the use of the English language in church and school. Teaching Orders, some of them established in America in consequence of the German Kulturkampf, are forced by them to retain the German language and German ideas although they teach in American schools and ‘propose to conduct schools for American misses.’ The results of these nationalistic policies are most deplorable, according to the memorial. Even Sisters of German descent, asked why their pupils ‘did not know their catechism better had to admit that they found too much difficulty in learning it in German.’ Thus children of German parents have only vague ideas of their religion and lose their faith. ‘Their spiritual masters....in the vain hope to keep them German, give to their religion a color thoroughly foreign, and they are lost to language as well as faith.’

“But this detrimental nationalistic spirit manifests itself not only in the school but also in the pulpit. ‘When Msgr. Heiss was made Bishop of LaCrosse, he chose the German church as his cathedral, and even to this day, under his successor (Flasch), we behold the strange phenomenon that the official language of a Catholic bishop in an American city is a language foreign to the country.’ Similar conditions prevailed at Green Bay ‘where English Catholics had to go to a neighboring city to hear an English sermon.’ After having severely criticized for like reasons the situation in Milwaukee, Ft. Wayne, Alton, at St. Francis Seminary, etc., the memorial boldly asserted:

“The object of some German bishops seems to be to Germanize their dioceses, and that of many German priests to Germanize their parishes. As soon as one of these priests is placed over a mixed parish, the school becomes German; German customs are introduced in the church; the English people, weary of sermons in bad English, gradually absent themselves from divine services; and American Protestants will never cross the threshold of a Catholic temple.’.... ‘These facts are a cause of disaster to the Church in America. The Catholics of the English language get discouraged; their love for religion becomes cold. Their character is not that of the Germans: they do not combine; they make no plans of resistance; except in extreme cases they do not bring their complaints to Rome. But they are beginning to regard the Church as a step-mother, and little by little they separate from her. Their children no longer attend Catholic schools, the heads of which understand but imperfectly the language of the country.

They reluctantly listen to sermons preached with foreign accents; the German habits and ideas are repelling to them. The more their American patriotism increases, the more difficulty they find in loving a religion all forms of which are exotic, and thus they withdraw, more and more, from their duty.

“Often English Catholics, being the first to settle in a locality, built at their own expense a church and rectory; later on a handful of Germans arrive – the war for the rights of Germans is carried on with obstinacy and the spirit of aggression characteristic of the compatriots of Bismarck. The English submit in order to have peace; a German priest is installed, and the parish is forever Germanized....We can cite parishes and dioceses in which the number of Catholics lost to the Church, because in an English country they sought to Germanize them, is frightful....If lately some traces of opposition to the Germans have come to the surface in America, it is in opposition to these constant encroachments so contrary to all justice and to all rights of English-speaking Catholics; it is an objection to this continued movement of the Germans to arrogate to themselves the entire government of the American Church....’

* * *

“Many other arguments along similar lines are presented in the memorial which can hardly be said to distinguish itself by kindness and generosity. Characteristic are two assertions which refer to religious Orders expelled from their mother country by persecution, and to the parochial schools in German parishes.

“Says the memorial: 'Reference is often made to the number of German religious Orders in the United States, to the number of colleges, and institutions for a higher education, established by the Germans. They forget to say that a religious Order introduced by the Germans always remains inscribed in the books of the [German] party as German, although after a few years the members to a great extent may be English which is especially the case with religious Orders of women. They forget to say that the institutions conducted by these Orders, and in which they seek to place their members as professors, generally are supported by English Catholics. Moreover, they forget to mention that several German religious Orders have lately come to the United States on account of persecution in Germany, and not because the Germans in America asked for their assistance, and that in many cases it is Catholics of the English language who have generously received them, and have given them employment in the English hospitals and asylums maintained by the money of English Catholics.'

“And again, 'They boast considerably of the great number of German school children in the parochial schools.' But aside from the fact that non-German children in mixed parishes are frequently counted as German, it must be taken into consideration that 'the German priests can easily build school-houses as they find a great help in the love of

new immigrants for their German language. The English have not this support, as the language of their parishioners is the language of the free schools of the State. For those who are acquainted with their motives, the numerous schools of the Germans prove among other things, that the new immigrants naturally seek the German language, and that some German priests are a little too much attached to it. But they do not prove that the German priests are more zealous than their English confreres, or that the German Catholics are almost equal in number to the English Catholics.'

“Next week's article will give a resume of the controversy of 1886, to be followed by several installments dealing with 'Cahenslyism.'”

* * * *

A curious fact about why Archbishop Ireland was never named a cardinal, when for years, at least since the early 1890s, he was widely rumored to be in line for a red hat. The *New York Times*, October 29, 1911, reported:

“ARCHBISHOP IRELAND SILENT. Friends Had Hoped He would Receive the Red Hat”

“St. Paul, Minn., Oct. 28 -- Archbishop John Ireland, when notified to-night of the announcement that Archbishops Farley of New York and O'Connell of Boston and Diemedo Falconio, Papal Delegate to the United States in Washington, were to be created Cardinals on Nov. 27, said:

“I have nothing to say in the matter.’

“For years whenever the need of a larger representation of American Catholicism among the Cardinals has been discussed, the name of Archbishop John Ireland of St. Paul has always been advanced.

“Those who understand the undercurrents of Vatican politics, however, have always expressed the opinion that His Grace would never be chosen. For one thing he he has suffered from injudicious friends, and on one occasion their pertinacity gave rise to a diplomatic scandal. When Bellamy Storer was United States Ambassador at Vienna, his wife, who has been converted to the Roman Catholic faith by the Archbishop, began to pull all sorts of strings to procure his promotion. She even went so far in a private audience with the Pope as to inform him that President Roosevelt would be much pleased if the Archbishop could be advanced....

“However, there is said to be another and more dignified reason for the neglect of Archbishop Ireland. He has been feared by the Propaganda as a man of too liberal views,

with the courage and the ability to express them....”

An earlier *New York Times* report, from September 22, 1910 gives much more detail to the affair, under the headline, with subheads: MRS. STORER CALLS ROOSEVELT A DANGER. Reopens Quarrel Over Her Husband's Dismissal as Ambassador for Activity at the Vatican. Quotes Ireland's Letters; Archbishop Said Roosevelt Authorized Message to Pope Asking His Elevation -- Cites Favors to Roosevelt.”

Dated Springfield, Mass., the report opens: Mrs. Bellamy Storer has reopened the controversy with Col. Theodore Roosevelt, which grew out of the removal of Mr. Storer as Ambassador to Austria in March, 1906, because of his activity in pressing the campaign at the Vatican for the promotion of Archbishop John Ireland of St. Paul to a cardinalate. A letter written by her in France and dated Sept. 6 will be published tomorrow in *The Springfield Republican*. In it Mrs. Storer -- the 'Dear Maria' of published letters from Col. Roosevelt -- reviews the relations of the Storers with him.

“Mrs. Storer cites letters from Archbishop Ireland, written in 1903 and 1904, to show that it was at the special desire of Mr. Roosevelt and with his authority that her husband pressed the claims of Mgr. Ireland at Rome. These letters contradict statements made by Mr. Roosevelt in his letter replying to the attack made by Mr. Storer in December, 1906, after he had been removed.

“Mrs. Storer also says that Mr. Roosevelt 'begged' her husband to use his influence to have him made Assistant Secretary of the Navy by President McKinley, and Mr. Storer had him appointed.

“The opinion is given that Mr. Roosevelt is a 'dangerous influence.' but that 'truth can overcome his power, as it can overcome all evil.'....”

Archbishop Ireland, the report continues, met with Roosevelt twice in the White House, in October and November 1903, and quotes a letter from Ireland to Mrs. Storer in which Ireland wrote: “The president said to me: 'Mr. Storer has told you what I said to him about you, Archbishop?' 'Well,' I replied, 'I do not remember.' 'About his going to Rome?' the president then asked. I said 'No.' 'Well,' he said, 'I told him I would not write a letter to the Pope asking for honors for you; but I said that he could go to Rome and say -- viva voce -- to the Pope, how much I wish you to be Cardinal, and how gratefully I personally would be for giving you that honor.' I am most clear in my memory as to every word....”

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In Part XVIII of “A Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota,” published February 15,

1951, Joseph Matt provided more details on the fear of the leading Americanist bishops – Archbishop John Ireland of St. Paul and Bishop John Keane of Richmond – had of German Catholics: that their militant, triumphalist Catholicism was an impediment to the growth of the Church in this country because Protestants found it offensive.

Catholics today might be surprised at the bigotry expressed in the “memorial” the two prelates submitted to the Propaganda Congregation in 1886; but it is an historical fact that had – and perhaps still does have – repercussions.

Here is Part XVIII:

“Preceding articles have repeatedly pointed out the close association of the language and nationality conflict with the errors condemned by Leo XIII in 1899 under the collective appellation of 'Americanism.' The exponents of 'Americanism' demanded that the nationalities carried to America by the stream of immigration should, within the fold of the Church, forfeit their individuality as to language and tradition, and be willing to give absolute precedence to their 'English' coreligionists as the only qualified representatives of Catholic thought and action. This they insisted to be the chief prerequisite to the realization of the home that America would witness the great miracle of the reconciliation between modern society and the Church.

“The eager pursuit of this theory which had no foundation in fact, in America no more than in any other country, unfortunately blinded them to important realities within the Church itself as well as to the true relation of the Church to the world. Since the Church, the City of God, is the antithesis of the spirit of the world, the reconciliation of modern culture – a secularized and paganized culture – could be achieved only by way of a disastrous 'appeasement.' For the culture demands concessions tantamount to complete submission not merely in regard to externals, but the Church in order to gain the good will of a cynical and hostile world, would have to abandon its very nature.

“These were some of the facts the authors of the memorial of December 6, 1886, completely disregarded when they apodictically asserted that German and other foreign traits in the Church in America were the main impediment to the great reconciliation between Catholicism and the world. From these false premises they drew strange conclusions which, in calm retrospect are of shocking harshness. They wrote, *inter alia*:

“With a German Church in America, there is no hope for the conversion of American Protestants. This is a vital question for religion. The Church will never be strong in America; she will never be sure of keeping within her fold the descendants of immigrants, Irish as well as others, until she has gained a decided ascendancy among the Americans themselves. Thank God, the times seem favorable for their conversion;

prejudices are dissipating: the conservative principles of the Catholic Church recommend her: there is a decided movement toward the Church. To accelerate it the Church naturally must, as far as can be done without danger to other interests, be presented in a form attractive to Americans. The great objection which they have until now urged against her – an objection which at certain periods of their history they entertained so strongly as even to raise persecutions – is, that the Catholic Church is composed of foreigners: that it exists in America as a foreign institution, and that it is, consequently, a menace to the existence of the nation. Can we persuade them to lay aside this objection, and to receive our invitations to hear the Church, by spreading before them the obstacles to the Americanization of the descendants of Catholic immigrants, and by placing in the first ranks, as the representative of the Church, men who have no sympathy with the habits and legitimate ideas of the country, and who understand perfectly the language of the country?

“Will Americans, perhaps, find pleasure in the temples in which even Catholics of the English language grow weary, and in which everything has the air of a foreign country? The Germans bring with them to America some noble qualities; but they also bring with them certain ideals and methods of action which the Americans fear. The Socialistic movements in the United States generally have Germans at their head; the Germans have little respect for Sunday; extend the German influence over the Church and the Americans will see in her a powerful agent in spreading the ideas and manners which they like least in the Germans. It is very easy to raise a stormy future for the Church; to accomplish this there is no means surer than to make her appear as the product of a European nationalism.

“It is desired, on the other hand, to give to the Church in our country the social prestige which will assure for her the public influence which she needs for the enjoyment of all her rights, and to make her recognized in the legislation of the Nation? Then give her, in her extreme forms, an American character, which moreover suits well with her divine catholicity: and above all, choose for her as her principal pastors and great representatives men whose sympathies and whose accent show that they understand the country and are devoted to its interests. A Catholicism with the customs and language of Germany will please just as little in America....

“Far be it from us to exclude Germans from the American episcopate. They have the right to be represented in the higher clergy, but only those ought to be Bishops, in a country like America, who know the language of the country well; who well understand the needs of the Church in the country; who can eradicate from their hearts foreign nationalism, and who see in their new charges an opportunity to serve the Church, to serve all her children, and not the opportunity to make one particular element of the Catholic population dominant. We have, thank God, in the priesthood and the episcopacy of America, some Germans, true ministers of the Catholic Church, and not

partisans of a particular nationality, and we thank God for their presence among us.

“It should no longer be necessary to place in the Episcopate of any ecclesiastical province so many Germans as to cause the belief that the German is the favored race in the Church, or to lead Americans, Catholics as well as Protestants, to suspect that a foreign element is seeking to prevail in the Church. A foreign character in the Church will always be a great danger to religion, and, we will say, we desire an Irish or French nationalism among us just as we do a German nationalism...’ Quoted from the English translation of the French original in *Relatio*, pp. 28-32).

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“This document – of which hardly more than one-sixth has been quoted in this series – is undoubtedly, as to contents and form, one of the strangest manifestations of Catholic thought in modern Church history. To evaluate its full significance and implication, we must keep in mind that it deals with problems of an era in which hundreds of thousands of immigrants from many different countries worshiped God in the only language they knew, namely their mother-tongue; of an era, moreover, in which the overwhelming majority of American Catholics were either immigrants or descendants, in the first and second generation, of immigrants in which no particular nationality or language represented in the Church rightfully claim a position of superiority with corresponding prerogatives.

“This situation called for a realistic and fair equalization – which, in fact, in civic affairs took place without serious friction – and it was a fundamental error of the memorial of December 6, 1886, to what amounted to a monopoly for the English language and to relegate the ‘imported’ languages to a position of mere toleration. This attitude and the injunction upon non-English immigrants of immediate and absolute self-effacement and adjustment to their new surroundings added up to a denial of natural rights – which was all the more reprehensible because it took place in the sphere of religion. Nor was the injustice lessened by the argument that submission to such wishes and demands would enhance the prestige of the Church and increase the number of conversions, for the end, no matter how desirable, does not justify unjust means.

“But even this argument – that only ‘foreign’ traits were a scandal to non-Catholics and that would readily accept the Church once she had acquired ‘an American character’ – emanated from a nebulous mirage. If this plea had been founded on realities, the conversion en masse so confidently anticipated six decades ago would be an actuality today when the nationality and language problem in the former sense, generally speaking, no longer exists. But, instead, the Oxmans, the Blanshards, etc., and strong belligerent organizations are vehemently opposing the Church and denouncing justified demands, in the field of education for instance (school buses, release time for religious

instruction, etc.), with the same fanatical intolerance as in the days of Knownothingism and the A.P.A. (American Protective Association).

“Exactly as in the days of open persecution, in the Fifties and Nineties, the attacks are directed at the essence of the Church, her 'rigid dogmas,' the 'enslavement of the conscience' (for instance in matrimonial matters and in regard to the sex fetish), so-called 'political Catholicism,' the alleged 'un-American spirit' of the Church particularly in regard to the principle of separation of Church and State, etc. There is no sign of 'a decided movement toward the Church,' and little evidence of sympathy for her 'conservative principles,' which condescending phrases of Mark Hanna and other Republican leaders of a past generation may have suggested. The fact is that the Church is not wanted. She is rejected as the adamantean antitheses of Liberalism and Secularism and all the other idols in the temples of the Enlightenment – to which belong, besides Masonic temples and the pagodas of other secret and semi-secret societies, many Protestant churches and Jewish synagogues of rationalistic persuasion.

* * *

“The same situation prevailed in 1886 and it was unfortunate that learned men were wrapped up in the idea, or played with the idea, that the Church was endangered from within, by Catholic immigrants, and thought it proper to send the sensational call of alarm to the Apostolic See that 'the American Church...is loudly crying to be saved from German and foreign nationalism' (*Relatio*, p. 31). What they actually had in mind is clearly evidenced in the ideas put forth by them in this and other controversies, – they were perturbed by strong Catholic opposition to the 'Americanist' conformity trends seeking a reconciliation between modern society and the Church. The German-American Priests Society (sneeringly called the 'Clerical Union'), the German-American Catholic congresses (Katholikentage), the German-American and French-American Catholic press, in those days a powerful factor, repudiated the program of the rising movement of 'Americanism' to 'let down the drawbridges,' thus abandoning vital positions, in order to bring about a reconciliation between modern culture and the Church. They held ideas different from those of modernistic 'Americanism' in regard to school and education, the modern State and its trends toward omnipotence and totalitarianism, and in regard to secret societies and other agencies and propagators of Liberalism and indifferentism in the disguise of tolerance. They not only refused to subscribe to tenets diluting and 'minimizing' Catholic fundamentals for the sake of illusory hopes and dreams, but openly proclaimed their opposition. And we can safely assume that it mainly for these reasons that the nationality and language question was made an issue of the first magnitude, engaging Catholics as well as secularist public opinion, in order to eliminate 'foreign' and 'un-American' influences impeding the glorious advance of 'the American Church' to world leadership.

“A considerable number of American Bishops refused to join the demonstration against the 'foreign peril,' and illustrious names of the time are not included in the supplementary manifesto submitted to the Propaganda Congregation by Archbishop Ireland and Bishop Keane. And several of those Bishops who signified their disagreement with Father Abbelen's contentions apparently were not in accord with the tendencies going beyond the immediate scope of the controversy. Some of the opinions cited in the supplementary protest are of a character decidedly at variance with the vitriolic condemnations voiced by the Bishop Gilmour and Moore and quoted in a preceding article; they express deep concern and anxiety about the presumed change in the attitude of the Germans ('who have always shown themselves good and faithful' – Bishop Ryan of Buffalo, *Relatio*, p. 58), and several Bishops who – apparently under the first shock upon receiving the disquieting news from Rome and very likely not familiar with the sensational text of the memorial – has written or cabled their assent, on later occasions demonstrated their full confidence in the German Catholics and supported their endeavors. That particularly applies to Archbishop Corrigan of New York.

“As characteristic of the anti-German sentiments (aired with special gusto in the secular press) may be mentioned the fact that the Rev. George Zuercher, an advocate of total temperance but notoriously intemperate in thought and speech, apparently not satisfied with the memorial's indictment of the Germans as protagonists of Socialism, forged the text to read that 'the *anarchistic* movements in the United States generally have Germans at their head' (*Foreign Ideas in the Catholic Church*, p. 8)! The same pamphlet, by the way, concluded its comment on the memorial with the following malicious assertion: 'The German party was not satisfied with what it got from Rome. Its next plan was to fill vacant bishoprics until it would be able to control Church legislation in America.'

“Brochures were published in both camps. The Rev. John Gmeiner published *Are German Catholics Unfairly Treated?* followed by a rebuttal *Calm Reason and Furor Teutonicus*. From the other camp came a number of replies to the memorial and its defenders: The Rev. Karl Algermissen, *Der deutsch-amerikanische Katholik*; Nich. Gonner, Sr., *Goliath*; Msgr. Joseph Jessing, *Katholisch und Deutsch-Americanisch*; Charles F. St. Laurent (from the French-Canadian point of view) *Language and Nationality*; Dr. A. Heiter and W. Kellmann, *Audiat et altera pars*, etc. Heiter-Kellmann's brochure emphasized that the quarrel was not so much about nationality and language as about the ideas held by German-American Catholics in opposition to 'Americanism.'

“The Propaganda Congregation rendered its decision on June 8, 1887. It affirmed the two most important petitions of the St. Louis and Milwaukee memorials. But different interpretations of the clear-cut decisions prolonged the controversy and as late as 1897 the Papal Delegate, Archbishop Martinelli, had to promulgate an authentic decision on one of the mooted questions. (Cf. Tardivel, *La Situation Religieuse aux Etats-Unis*, pp.

205-207).”

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In Part XIX of his “Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota,” Joseph Matt launched into his explanation of the Cahensly “controversy,” a contrived “conspiracy” fueled by the secular press which claimed, in essence, that there was a plot by German-American Catholics, led from Germany, to take over the American Church. While the controversy is little known, if at all, by U.S. Catholics today, it was hugely important in the last two decades of the 19th century, because it was used as a wedge by the press, led by the *New York Times*, to divide U.S. Catholics and force them to chose loyalties – to the Americanist Church of Cardinal Gibbons and Archbishop Ireland or to Rome.

Part XIX, published February 22, 1951:

“Many communications and inquiries reaching *The Wanderer* office from practically all parts of the country show a surprising interest in these articles and their author. For readers of our German edition, in which the publication of the series began simultaneously, an introduction of the writer was not necessary, because after more than fifty years of his editorship they are well acquainted with his 'hand-writing': besides, there have been many personal references to the writer in the text of the articles.

“However, many inquiries are coming from readers of the *Ohio Waisenfreund*, which is also published by us, and particularly of our English edition, who are not as well acquainted with the set up of *The Wanderer*, and a considerable number of whom have been added to our subscription list in recent months. They surely have a right to know the name of the writer who is assuming the responsibility for these restatements of some chapters of our history. For this reason, the name of the author will henceforth be published.

“The German language has a number of expressive terms to characterize the different types of distortion of historical facts. The Catholic historian Onno Klopp, one of the outspoken adversaries of Prussianism, coined the word *Geschichtsbaumeister* (architects of history). *Geschichtslugen* (perversions of historical facts) was the title of a book published in the days of the *Kulturkampf* by the brave Catholic journalist Majunke and other 'Lovers of the Truth.' Closely related with these words are *Politische Brunnenvergiftung* (poisoning of the wells for political purposes) and *Konfessionelle Brunnenvergiftung* (poisoning of the wells in the religious sphere). The last of these words was the title of a book in which the Catholic litterateur H. Keiter exposed the

great mass of distortions of Catholic doctrines and historical facts and shameless lies about Catholic practices found in literary works of every description.

“The English language does not flexibly lend itself to an adequate translation of these German word combinations. But it seems we have one word in English which gathers, as a prism, the meaning and nuances of the multi-lettered words. It is an artificial word structure baffling many a reader, although it was well-known sixty years ago, having entered even the Capitol in Washington and references to it may be found in present day writings and lectures.

“It is the word *Cahenslyism* of which I speak. It is of reputable origin, having been derived from the name of an excellent German Catholic man, Peter Paul Cahensly (1838-1923), a merchant of Limburg, for some time a member of the Prussian diet and the German Reichstag, and founder of the St. Raphael Society for the Protection of Emigrants.

“Cahensly and all the men who fought him so bitterly are dead. But the defaming accusations heaped upon him and his endeavors have survived him. They may be found in pretentious biographies of eminent men and are rehashed in insignificant pamphlets and magazine articles by writers who have vague ideas about the man and the quarrel perpetuating his name. They have read or heard of a 'conspiracy' against America and the Church in America, and of the glorious defeat of these 'sinister' designs and with naïve fervor put the victory over this man Cahensly on a level with other romantic episodes of American history, for instance, Decatur's epic encounter with the Tripolitan pirates.

“Innumerable newspaper articles and many brochures have tried to defend Cahensly and to correct the misrepresentations and untrue statements linked with his name. Up to the time of his death, in December 1923, Cahensly regularly submitted to the Catholic world his conscientious reports on the progress of the great organization founded by him, the St. Raphael Society, and, in his irenic manner, continued to explain his efforts in newspaper articles and brochures and in particular in the *St. Raphael's Blatt*. At the most crucial time of the controversy, he had addressed 'Open Letters' in the columns of *The Wanderer* to one of his enemies, U.S. Senator Cushman K. Davis of Minnesota, to prove the baselessness and unfairness of the Senator's charges. On the basis of pertinent documents and informations from Mr. Cahensly himself, the present writer forty years ago published an extensive review of the conflict and, in other articles, corrected superficial and false statements in books on the life of Cardinal Gibbons (Allen S. Will), Pope Leo XIII (Msgr. Bernard Reilly), and others.

“Statements setting forth the true story of the Cahensly conflict and rehabilitating the name of the man so wantonly defamed have appeared in a half-dozen languages. The

Holy See expressed its confidence in Mr. Cahensly and repeatedly praised and honored him, naming him, for instance, a Papal Chamberlain (di Capa e Spada). But without rest, another Ahasverus, Cahenslyism continued to wander through American literature – sometimes cloaked in the floating mantle of the Big Lie, which, according to Hitler, is the most effective kind of lie, then again in the variegated harlequin costume of half-truths, which are more insidious but no less fatal, and then again wrapped up in subtle innuendoes of a shammed objectivity.

“The late Archbishop [Sebastian] Messmer [of Milwaukee] some years before his death had planned to discuss Cahenslyism in a historic treatise. He unfortunately did not carry out his intention and valuable material brought together by him is gathering dust in Milwaukee archives. (According to *The Catholic Historical Review*, 1947, p. 303, it 'seems to have been lost.')

Some time ago, I was informed that the Catholic University in Washington is collecting material on the scandal in the Catholic life of our country and that it is – or was – intending to include photostatic copies of pertinent articles which have appeared in the columns of *The Wanderer*.

“It is to be hoped that the plan will not fall into oblivion as did Archbishop Messmer's intention! For what is involved is a debt of honor on the part of American Catholics – the reparation of a serious injustice inflicted not only on the one Catholic man who had to take the brunt of bitter attacks but on German Catholics in general: the atonement for this deplorable scandal – and I repeat the word deliberately, a scandal: the retraction of a falsehood; in fact, a wide assortment of falsehoods, with which, in the hey-day of 'Americanism,' other zealous Catholic spokesmen, with the gleeful aid of the press, stifled justified opposition, calumniated the opponents in Rome and before the entire Catholic world discredited them before the secularist public opinion of our country.

“As long as this cankerous falsehood is permitted to poison American minds and frustrate the restitution demanded by Christian morals, we American Catholics forfeit the right to protest against *Geschichtslügen* practiced against us by our enemies!

* * *

“A few years ago John. J. Meng made a brave attempt to clarify the old controversy in two articles published by *The Catholic Historical Review* (vols. 31 and 32). He succeeded to some extent in carrying out his obvious intention to present both sides of the question. But he offers a preponderance of source material inimical to Cahensly, while important documents apparently were inaccessible to him. Referring, for instance, to *Relatio de quastione Germanica*, etc., one of the chief sources of preceding *Wanderer* articles, he says: 'An extremely limited edition...was published....Copies of this rare item are almost non-existent.' Mr. Meng's apparent failure to procure a copy is undoubtedly responsible for a number of lapses and a certain inclination on his part to rely on mere

speculation. He assumes that Father Abbelen wrote the St. Louis petition of 1884 and even doubts the existence of the memorial. The actions of the St. Louis priests 'is said to have taken place in 1884,' but since the Rev. John Conway of the (defunct) *Northwestern Chronicle* of St. Paul, who 'stood in violent opposition to Cahenslyism' and 'was not a disinterested witness,' is 'the sole authority for this statement.' Mr. Meng dismisses the question with the hope that 'adequate archival investigation would uncover the truth of the matter.' The fact is that *Relatio*, as was shown in preceding *Wanderer* articles, contains the full Latin text of the petition submitted to the Propaganda Congregation in 1884.

“Moreover, Mr. Meng's articles, despite the good intentions of the author, show a deficiency in what Weher had in mind when he spoke of '*der Dinger Zusammenhang versth'n*' – of having a clear vision of the connection of things and events. While he tries conscientiously to be objective, his presentation – as I know from a number of letters and conversations – leaves the impression with uninformed or badly informed, readers that the attacks on 'Americanism' were a sequel of Cahenslyism, and that diplomats and politicians in Germany were, somehow, involved in the 'conspiracy.' The fact is that the hue and cry was raised against Cahenslyism as part of the strategy of the exponents of 'Americanism' (as careful perusal even of Mr. Meng's articles clearly demonstrates), and that the imputation of any connivance on the part of Cahensly with the German, or Prussian, Governments has long since been thoroughly discredited.

* * *

“The activities of Peter Paul Cahensly as the friend and protector of emigrants must be judged against the background of the modern migration of nations in the past century. The unselfish services he rendered to alleviate the lot of many thousands of his fellowmen deserved a monument of lasting gratitude. It may be argued – with a measure of justification – that, in the second phase of his activities centering around the petition of the Lucerne conference in December, 1890, he assumed a role for which he had no *missio canonica*. It was that international conference which decided to submit to the Holy See a set of proposals dealing with American Church matters. Cahensly and his colleagues at Lucerne may have erred in regard to some of their contentions and proposals and particularly in regard to proper procedure. But, upon careful examination of the facts, no fair-minded man will doubt that Cahensly acted from noble motives and that he was innocent of political scheming and the pan-Germanistic tendencies of which he was later accused with a bitterness unprecedented in the history of the Catholic Church in America.

“But let the facts speak for themselves. I will first give an outline of the history and purpose of the St. Raphael Society and, in subsequent articles, of the history of the Cahensly conflict – Cahenslyism.

“The conditions observed by Peter Paul Cahensly in the beginning of the Sixties, when stationed as a young merchant at Le Havre, one of the principle ports of departure for emigrants were the disastrous by-product of the great westward movement of Europeans in the nineteenth century. Between 1821 and 1892 a little less than fifteen million Europeans immigrants sought the shores of the United States. Of these, 4,748,440 came from Germany; 3,502,247 from Ireland. In the years between 1871 and 1892, 1,415,364 Germans reached American ports, and in the same period, 1,203,528 Irish immigrants arrived. The number for the years 1891 and 1892, were: 244,312 Germans, 111,173 Irish. In the seventy-two years between 1820 and 1892, in addition to the immigrants from Germany, 585,606 immigrants were registered as coming from Austria-Hungary (in the years 1891 and 1892 alone, 151,178) and probably one-half of these were of German nationality. The same percentage may be assumed for the 185,488 immigrants (up from 1892) from Switzerland, and many thousand German Alsatians were undoubtedly among the 379,637 Frenchmen reaching the United States between 1821 and 1892. (*Arrivals of Alien Passengers and Immigrants in the United States from 1820 to 1892*. Bureau of Statistics, Washington, 1893)

“These few figures illustrate, to some extent, the vast problem immigration posed for the United States. (Let me add, in parenthesis, that it was not nearly as terrific as the present-day problem of partitioned and impoverished Germany to provide homes and existence for about the same number – fifteen millions of Germans driven out from the East European countries under Russian domination.)

“For decades, year after year, many thousand men and women had come to America, who from the very moment when they left their homeland were preyed upon by unscrupulous exploiters and murderers of souls, while no hand was raised for the defense and protection. No one – neither governments nor private agencies – bothered about these uprooted masses coming in particularly large numbers over the French port of the Le Havre-de-Grace. A lone German priest, the Rev. Lambert Rethmann of the diocese of Osnabreuck, took care of the forsaken emigrants as well as circumstances permitted (*Kirckliche Fursorge fur die Auswanderer*, Soest, 1873, a copy of which, together with many other sources, is among my material; *Social Justice Review*, February 1951). Father Rethmann's care did not, of course, reach beyond the harbor. Once they were aboard their ship, the emigrants found themselves surrounded by frightful conditions; the history of emigration will forever be a blot on nineteenth century civilization. After a journey in a dirty, rotting sailing vessel, often at sea for months, many of the half-famished emigrants landed as physical wrecks. Pitiful complaints of victims of *Kulturschande* and indignant protests of witnesses of the inhumanities inflicted on the emigrants who were treated worse than cattle, are confirmed in an official American document which should preface every discussion of Cahenslyism. It is the following message of President Grant which I found in James D.

Richardson, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents 1789-1897*
(Vol. VII, p. 196-197):

“Executive Mansion, May 14, 1872: To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States:

“In my message to Congress at the beginning of its present session allusion was made to the hardships and privations inflicted upon poor immigrants on shipboard and upon arrival to our shores, and a suggestion was made favoring national legislation for the purpose of effecting a radical cure of the evil.

“Promise was made that a special message on this subject would be presented during the present session should information be received which would warrant it. I now transmit to the two Houses of Congress all that has been officially received since that time bearing upon the subject, and recommend that such legislation be had as will secure, first, such room and accommodation on shipboard as is necessary for health and comfort, and such privacy and protection as not to compel immigrants to be the unwilling witnesses to so much vice and misery; and second, legislation to protect them upon their arrival at our seaports from the knaves who are ever ready to despoil them of the little all which they are able to bring with them. Such legislation will be in the interests of humanity, and seems to be fully justified. The immigrant is not a citizen of any State or Territory upon his arrival, but comes here to be-land, surrounded by strangers, without employment and ignorant of the means of securing it. Under the present system this is the fate of thousands annually, the exposures on shipboard and the treatment on landing driving thousands to lives of vice and shame who, with proper humane treatment, might become useful and respectable members of society.

“I do not advise national legislation in affairs that should be regulated by States; but I see no subject more national in its character than provision for the safety and welfare of the thousands who leave foreign lands to become citizens of this Republic.

“When their residence is chosen, they may then look to the laws of their locality for protection and guidance.

“The mass of immigrants arriving upon our shores, coming as they do, on vessels under foreign flags, makes treaties with the nations furnishing these immigrants necessary for their complete protection. For more than two years efforts have been made on our part to secure such treaties, and there is now reasonable ground to hope for success. – U.S. Grant.’

* * *

“Prior to this historic document calling public attention to a deplorable default from humanitarian, social and political aspects, Peter Paul Cahensly had been at work for more than seven years, and not without success, to arouse the Catholic world to action. His endeavors are an epic of unselfish Christian charity and of genuine Catholic Action and, at the same time of the Cahensly conflict, had not been paralleled by any similar effort in America. And the legislative measures requested by President Grant were delayed for a number of years while the humble man from Limburg an der Lahn indefatigably worked and cared and planned for the uprooted emigrants and submerged immigrants.”

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In Part XXI of Joseph Matt's “A Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota,” published March 8, 1951, the immigrant-editor of *The Wanderer* detailed the “ignoble propaganda campaign” against Peter Paul Cahensly, and how the term “Cahenslyism” was used by “Americanists” in the Church to defame their opponents.

“CAHENSLYISM,” (Continued)

“Preceding articles repeatedly referred to the fact that Cahensly's activities in the first years of the St. Raphael's Society were only indirectly concerned with the problems of the German-American Catholics. Cahensly and his society for a number of years applied themselves to the tasks the necessity of which had been suggested by observations at Havre and other European emigration ports, confining themselves to emigration problems as was indicated in the very name of the society – 'for the Protection of Catholic German Emigrants.' The society did not propose to propagate emigration but deemed it an important work of Christian charity to offer advice and assistance to those bound for foreign shores, and to protect them against exploitation by unscrupulous agents and transportation companies and lodging houses, and particularly against the notorious religious and moral dangers aboard the emigration vessels.

“Practical experience in the course of time, however, revealed the inadequacy of the original working program, with the result that the society sought contacts with Catholics in foreign countries, particularly in the United States, to enlist their cooperation. This, in the beginning, proved to be up hill work. Efforts to complement the program through its extension to America finally led to the scandalous Cahensly controversy.

“I have before me a brittle copy of the address which Mr. Cahensly delivered at the Thirty-First German Catholic Congress in Amberg, Bavaria, on September 2, 1884, in the year following his trip to America. It epitomizes the problems presented more

extensively in the Lucerne memorial of 1890 which caused so much misunderstanding and bitter strife. Reporting on the founding of the American branch of the St. Raphael's Society, Mr. Cahensly made clear that the work of the society could no longer be restricted to the protection of the emigrants 'on this side of the ocean' but must include adequate measures to continue the care 'after their arrival in America, in order to save them for our Holy Mother, the Church....What will it avail our Catholic emigrants if, after we have conducted them safely to the ship, they run into the danger on the other side of the ocean of losing the greatest treasure they have, their holy Catholic faith!' Many thousand emigrants, the speaker explained, had given up their faith in the New World. One of the reasons is, he said, 'that Catholics heretofore have paid no attention to the newcomers, and neglected to channel the stream of immigrants to places where pastoral care had already been established. On my trip through western parts of the United States, I found out that even now thousands of Catholics are continually settling in places where they meet priests only a few times throughout the year. The parents, as a rule, keep the faith as well as may be expected under the circumstances – but what will become of the children who are growing up without school and priest? They will, sooner or later, succumb to religious indifferentism.'

“Realizing the vastness of the problem and encouraged by the highest ecclesiastical authorities in Rome, Cahensly carried his message to the Catholics throughout Europe. At the International Social Congress at Liege, in 1887, his efforts to establish an Austrian as well as an Italian branch were finally crowned with success. Subsequently, many other nationalities organized St. Raphael's Societies, some with American branches.

* * *

“The representatives of the St. Raphael's Societies organized up to that time held an international conference at Lucerne, Switzerland, in December, 1890. It was that gathering, and the Memorial submitted in its behalf to the Holy See a few months later, which caused much bitter resentment and was denounced in America as a sinister plot allegedly instigated by Peter Paul Cahensly. Beginning with these outbursts all preceding and subsequent controversies dealing with the nationality and language question were labeled collectively as 'Cahenslyism,' – a misnomer for more than one reason.

“The deplorable quarrel is characterized by three particular facts: 1. The different phases of the nationality and language and school controversies, as well as other disputes with less sensational concomitants, were closely connected with 'Americanism' condemned by Leo XIII in January 1899. 2. The unfair presentation of 'Cahenslyism' and its denunciation as an anti-American 'conspiracy' was of the warp and woof of the strategy of 'Americanism,' the aim of which was to stifle the rising opposition against its

'appeasement' policies toward modern Society. 3. It was, contrary to persistent assertions and claims of uncritical writers and lecturers, a disastrous disservice to the Catholic cause to defame, either from subjectively honest but misguided conviction or, in some cases, for obviously malicious reasons, the Lucerne conference and to misconstrue it as a political plot backed by unfriendly governments. This fantastic campaign of defamation, which for decades has been kept alive by an ignoble propaganda, is unique in modern Church history in that it was waged against a Catholic group by another Catholic group assisted by secularist politicians and unscrupulous newspapers.

“‘Cahenslyism’ is one of the darkest chapters in the history of ‘Americanism,’ which continues to confuse even those who approach it with the intention of being objective. Nevertheless, one-sided glorification of its leaders does no longer satisfy searching minds and the less glamorous aspects of ‘Americanism’ are clearly being recognized. Mr. John J. Meng, in his introductory article on ‘Cahenslyism’ (*Cath. Hist. Rev.*, vol. 31, p. 309 seq.) speaks of ‘the fermentation of this period’ (1880-1908) and referring to a study published by Fr. Thomas T. McAvoy of Notre Dame in the *Review of Politics* (1943), states that ‘no single individual problem that confronted the Church in the United States during these years was totally unrelated to its companion problems.’ He could have stated more forcefully what in my opinion is an historical fact, namely, that ‘Americanism’ under the leadership of Archbishop Ireland and other prominent prelates, was, unfortunately, the dominant factor of Catholic intellectual life of the period, subordinating it to the governing idea of the reconciliation between Society and Christianity. There was, as I pointed out in one of the expository articles of this series, a definite parallel between the fundamental ideas and manifestations of ‘Americanism’ and the thoughts and methods in vogue at different times in France from Bossuet to Lacordaire. Like their great French prototypes, the leaders of ‘Americanism’ were men imbued with great zeal for the Church and burning love for their country, but came closer to seeking a conformation of the Church to Society than to seeking a conciliation of Society with the Church and in some respects barely escaped the dangers which, as even M. Brunetiere admitted, cast a shadow on the lives of some of the remarkable ‘minimizers’ in France.

* * *

“‘There were,’ says Meng, ‘essentially three main branches to the one great problem of ‘Americanism.’ There were the doctrinal question, the political question, and the administrative question – and these three were in essence one.’ ‘The doctrinal problem,’ he asserts, paraphrasing old slogans, ‘came to a head in Europe, where a sharp controversy over the alleged heretical character of certain American teachings in matters of faith called finally for the definitive intervention of the Holy Father.’ The other ‘branches’ are defined, more correctly but not very lucidly, as follows: ‘The political problem centered in the United States upon the relationship of State and Church,

particularly with reference to the school question. There were significant matters of faith and administration, as well as of politics, involved in the school question and its settlement. The third phase of the problem, the administrative question, was never far removed from other aspects of Church life at this period. In a very real sense, there is a certain degree of inaccuracy implicit in treating it as a phenomenon of Church life separate and distinct from the doctrinal and political discussions which accompanied it. A still more risky business is the segregation for special attention of one minor phase of the larger administrative problem. For purposes of brevity and close analysis, however, that risk must be taken.'

“It is regrettable that Mr. Meng took that risk without heeding the warning of Horace: *Brevis esse labore, obscurus fio* – 'Striving for brevity, I become obscure' – if not confusing. With 'the purpose...to look more closely into the background and early development of the demand for a greater degree of ecclesiastical autonomy by foreign language groups within the American Church,' he courageously vaults 'the background and early development' of the nationality and language question and, with a *salto mortale*, lands in the midst of 'Cahenslyism'. 'This' – namely, 'the demand for a greater degree of autonomy' etc., – 'was the movement that became known eventually as "Cahenslyism".'” And, writing history in reverse and cramming 'earlier experiences' into subsequent discussions, he immediately continues:

“There were those in the Church who saw “Cahenslyism” as a definite conspiracy to make of the American Church another cog in the machine of Prussian political pan-Germanism. Others considered it a well meant but impolitic attempt to strengthen the Catholic faith of the thousands of central European immigrants coming to these shores. The proponents of the demand for autonomy professed nothing more than a deep concern for the spiritual welfare of the foreign language groups in this country, and defended their demands as being necessitated by the administrative weaknesses of Church organization in the United States. There were other shades of opinion on the subject held in various quarters.'

“This analysis of the contrary views of those engaged in the controversy is, generally speaking, correct but is somewhat colored by a suggestive reference to Mr. Cahensly as a member of the Prussian diet (from 1885 to 1913) and of the German Reichstag (from 1898 to 1903). 'These facts,' Mr. Meng adds with a take-it-or-leave-it flourish, 'possess a sinister significance for those who view “Cahenslyism” as a German political conspiracy.'

“No doubt! And those, too, who had no idea of the important part members of the nobility and aristocracy, in a former age, played in the life of Catholic Germany, or looked upon that phenomenon with 'democratic' disdain and suspicion, very likely also resented the fact that so many men of distinction – big industrialists, landowners,

princes, barons, counts (among them Count Konrad Preysing, the uncle of one of the greatest Churchmen of our time, the late Cardinal Preysing, Bishop of Berlin) – were supporting Peter Paul Cahensly and his St. Raphael's Society.

* * *

“Mr. Meng follows the usual pattern of casting the nationality with the language conflict upon the Procrustean bed of 'Cahenslyism,' and thus, in spite of much source material he might have used to advantage, failed to make a more valuable contribution to the clarification of the old controversy. His main error was the disregard of Fr. McAvoy's advice approvingly quoted by him, namely, that 'the critical searcher for truth will be content to uncover the facts of the case and let the honor and guilt fall where it may.' 'Cahenslyism' can't come to rest because one writer after another, instead of establishing, first of all, all pertinent facts without fear or favor, pragmatically proceeded from the fixed assumption that Cahensly and his friend acted from sinister or at least suspect motives, while his opponents were animated by righteous wrath and noble love of Church and country. From these premises not only scurrilous pamphleteers of the Zuercher type but also more serious writers (particularly Allen S. Will in *Life of Cardinal Gibbons*) have drawn the wildest conclusions, and concocted an *olla podrida* of facts and fiction and half-truths. Efforts of German-American priests to attain a canonical status for foreign-language parishes, as well as the activities of the German-American Priest's Society, the Katholikentage and other manifestations of virile Catholicity, are twisted and stretched and mutilated until they fit into the Procrustes bed of 'Cahenslyism.' Whatever German-American Catholics undertook before the Lucerne conference was part of the overture to the melodrama and the climax (I wish I could say the finale!) of the 'fermentation' period, the struggle with 'Americanism,' according to the same romancers, was a vindictive attempt of 'the German party,' on both sides of the Atlantic, to discredit their adversaries (while the fact of the situation was somewhat reversed!)

“There is no indication anywhere that Peter Paul Cahensly had any influence on the two German-American Memorials, the one submitted by eighty-two St. Louis priests in 1884 and the other submitted by Fr. Abbelen with the approval of Archbishop Heiss in 1886. There is not the slightest reference to either in the answer of Bishop Gilmour and Bishop Moore, or in that of Archbishop Ireland and Bishop Keane, or in the comments of the bishops recorded in the *Relatio*. Cahensly himself was professedly dissatisfied with the lack of interest which he encountered in the United States at his personal visit. (*Der St. Raphaels-Verein*, p. 28). His letter to the German Catholic Congress in Cincinnati, in 1888, which is occasionally mentioned among the exhibits supposed to prove Cahensly's entanglement in German-American affairs, would be thrown out as evidence in any court. It deals with the establishment of Leo House in New York, a hostel for immigrants, and merely relays a message of Cardinal Melchers (who, as Archbishop of

Cologne, was thrown into prison during the Kulturkampf and 'deposed' by the Prussian Government), announcing that Pope Leo had donated his portrait to the projected institution (*Verhandlungen*, etc., p.58). Until proven to be wrong, I maintain that there is not a shred of evidence anywhere lending support to the theory that Cahensly was the *spiritus rector* behind the scenes and that, therefore, the term 'Cahenslyism' is applicable to a series of events in American Catholic life. The nationality and language conflict was in progress long before Cahensly established contact with German Catholics in America.”

For reasons of space, we must end Part 21 here, to be resumed next week. This is one of the longest, if not longest of the sections in the series; but Joseph Matt is just getting warmed up in his defense of Cahensly.

* * *

As related earlier in this series "Cahenslyism" and its adherents, "Cahenslyites" were villified; the terms were epithets used by Americanists (both Catholic and Protestant) to smear "ultramontanes" -- those who were Catholic first and American second.

To grasp how big an issue this was at the time, consider that the *New York Times*, all through the latter part of the year 1892, provided extensive coverage of the libel suit Bishop Winand Wigger brought against one of his own priests, Fr. Patrick Corrigan (no relation to Michael Corrigan, Archbishop of New York), who accused his bishop, in print, of, among other things, being an agent of the Prussian government.

In presenting the trial to the public, the *New York Times* ran a story, December 12, 1892, with this headline, outlining what was at stake:

"GRAVE ISSUES INVOLVED: Vast Importance of the Trial of Father Corrigan; The Most Precious Interests of the Catholic Church at Stake -- Progressive and Conservative Elements at War -- Little Chance of a Fair Trial"

According to the report: "....."It may well be said that the trial this afternoon and the causes which have led up to are the most extraordinary events in the history of the Roman Catholic Church in this country. The most precious interests of the Church are at stake. The result and the developments of the trial will affect the influence, aye, the very life, of the Church in this country....

"As an American, however, he [Fr. Corrigan] began to look with disfavor upon the efforts of Catholics, as well as other citizens, to characterize the Church to which he belonged as a foreign institution. He conceived that Americanism and Catholicism were not at all irreconcilably opposed to each other, and as an American Catholic he resented any such assertions, open or implied.

"On the other hand were the Roman Catholics, aliens or naturalized citizens, who regarded Americanism as their natural enemy. They could not or would not consider even the possibility of a compromise. As Gambetta said of the clergy of France, so they said of the spirit of their adopted country: *L'Americanisme, viola l'ennemi*. "In Americanism, behold your enemy"....

"With them [i.e. Archbishop Corrigan, Bishop Wigger, and the pro-German-American Catholics] the fight is one of life and death. They realize that if Fr. Corrigan wins, or even if he does not lose, their hopes will be dead and they might as well furl their banner of Cahenslyism. Corrigan's victory means the death knell of European influences in the American Catholic Church. If Fr. Corrigan is not punished severely, or if the bishops fails to get the full measure of his revenge, then the day has arrived to hail the acceptance by the Catholic American Church of the Monroe doctrine in matters spiritual as well as temporal...."

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It may be difficult for modern Catholics to believe, but there was a time – a time when hundreds of thousands of immigrants were making their way to the United States annually – when the Catholic bishops of this country were not only silent on the problems facing immigrants but did little, or nothing to assist them. As Joseph Matt points out in No. XX of his "Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota," it was a German layman, Peter Paul Cahensly, who initiated the first Catholic program to assist Catholic immigrants. Over the years, however, "Cahenslyism" became a great bogeyman in the public imagination, and a threat to the notion of America as a "melting pot."

Here is Part XX:

"Peter Paul Cahensly, blessed by thousands and misunderstood and defamed by others, spent many years of his fruitful life in the service of friendless emigrants. Since the time, in the beginning of the Sixties when, as a young merchant, he had observed the great misery of the thousands of emigrants in the French port of Le Havre, he had given freely of his great energy and kindness to heroic endeavors to alleviate the lot of those seeking a home beyond the seas. At first, he stood almost alone. Encouraged by the Venerable Mother Frances Schervier of Aachen, the saintly foundress of the Congregation of the Poor of St. Francis, who passed through Havre on her way to America to visit the convents of her congregation, he went to Trier (Treves), in 1865 to appeal to the German Catholic Congress for aid. There he met not only the leaders of Catholic Germany but also representatives from other countries who were greatly interested in the emigration problem, among them M. Boudon of Paris and M. Ducpetiaux of Brussels. Mr. Cahensly

and Fr. Lambert Rethmann presented the cause of the forlorn emigrants with such convincing eloquence that the congress adopted several resolutions.

“These resolutions 1.) urged the governments of the main emigration cities – Hamburg, Bremen, Antwerp, Havre – to provide legislation for the separation of the emigrants aboard the ships according sex; 2.) called the attention of the Catholics in Belgium to the deplorable neglect of German Catholic emigrants at Antwerp, proposed an agency for Catholic emigrants at Hamburg and entrusted with the administration of its temporal affairs the stanch parliamentarian Dr. Joseph Lingens of Aachen and his St. Joseph Society; 3.) appealed to the St. Vincent societies in the United States, particularly New York, for cooperation in safeguarding the religious and moral welfare of immigrants.

“That was the beginning of concentrated efforts to improve the lot of emigrants in port of departure as well as aboard ship. After 1865, the emigration problem was on the agenda of every annual congress of the Catholics of Germany where originated most of the legislative measures, in Germany as well as other European countries, to procure for emigrants protections against physical and moral dangers.

“Efforts to find similar cooperation in the United States failed; a petition addressed by the German Catholic Congress to the St. Vincent societies in New York received not even a reply; an address sent to American bishops by a general convention of German and Austrian Catholic societies, held at Innsbruck in 1867, also remained unanswered. (Cahensly *Der St. Raphaelsverein* etc., Freiburg 1900 pp.12-14). The German Catholic Central Verein, on the other hand, at its convention in New York, in 1868, discussed the immigration problem and delegated its Vice President J. Koelble to meet the ships in the harbor and extend assistance to German immigrants. Mr. Koelble reported at the Catholic Congress in Bamberg, in 1869, that at least stopgap measures had been provided to take care of the most urgent needs of the new-comers. Soon thereafter, similar steps were taken in Baltimore.

“At the same gathering, the Rev Ibach, of Limburg, submitted a number of resolutions, one of which proposed the establishment of a permanent committee for the protection of emigrants. Members of the first executive committee were Prince Isenburg-Birstein, the Rev. Ibach, Baron Felix von Loe, the parliamentarian Joseph Lingens (called 'St. Joseph' by his anti-Catholic enemies), Cahensly, etc.

“That was the beginning of the St. Raphael's Society. But the actual organization took place in 1871, at the Catholic Congress in Mainz which decided unanimously that 'it was necessary to raise funds in support of the work of the emigration committee' and to organize a society for the protection of emigrants. This put the great charitable undertaking, for which Cahensly had worked so faithfully for more than sixteen years, on a sound basis and the funds collected for it made it possible to carry out a number of

projects, among them the establishment, in port cities, of missionary stations for emigrants and the regular employment of reliable agents and protectors. The first one of the latter was Theodor Meynberg, who served faithfully until his death in 1909: I was well-acquainted with this staunch Catholic man and his unselfish work, having visited him during four stays in Hamburg.

“St. Raphael's Society soon had representatives at most of the principle ports of the European continent and England. In the Eighties, the Society could point to remarkable achievements. At the Catholic Congress in Breslau in 1886, the secretary reported that in the thirteen preceding years, no less than 180,000 emigrants had availed themselves of the Society in Hamburg and Bremen alone. St. Raphael's Society had won the confidence of the German bishops, of whom several introduced church collections for its benefit, and Pope Leo expressed approval of its work by bestowing indulgences on its members and proteges.

“Having gained considerable prestige and influence, the Society extended its activities also to the parliaments. Members of the Centre Party submitted resolutions in the Reichstag calling attention to abuses still existing in the ports and aboard the ships, and demanding remedial measures, if possible by international agreements. Conditions in America, in spite of President Grant's message to Congress, were still unsatisfactory because of the dilatory manner in which immigration legislation was handled. In Germany, too, the Society struck many a snag. There were, in addition to the reluctance of the Liberal parties to comply with the demands of the Centre Party for corrective legislation, open opposition and chicanery on the part of the Prussian bureaucracy – an advance refutation of later calumnies that Cahensly was in the service of Prussianism and Pan-Germanism. The historic fact is that the Prussian Government attempted to suppress the St. Raphael Society and Catholic newspapers which had published its appeals were brought to court and convicted on technicalities; the judges, however, had more sense than the bureaucrats, imposed a fine of a farthing, in the case of the Cologne *Volkszeitung* of three marks (75 cents) and acquitted the Society. The German-American historian Kapp, who after his return from America had become a member of the Reichstag, in the session of February, 1882, protested vehemently against the chicanery of the Prussian bureaucrats.

* * *

“It surely cannot be asserted that Cahensly in all these years of strenuous activities betrayed any signs of nationalistic and Prussian-chauvinistic tendencies. He stands before us as a warm-hearted Catholic man of action, a pioneer of Catholic Action in the full sense of the term. And the same unselfishness and willingness to serve his fellow-men animated his later activities, which in America earned for him, instead of thanks, ingratitude and abuse.

“It was due to the unceasing efforts of Peter Paul Cahensly and his colleagues in the St. Raphael's Society that the world, governments as well as public opinion, had at least been informed of the frightful conditions connected with the increasing problems of emigration and that the governments took steps – or at least promised to 'do something' – to curb the most challenging evils.

“Meanwhile, the number of emigrants to America increased from year to year. In 1880 and 1881 more than 203,000 emigrants departed from Hamburg and Bremen alone; 31,705 of these made use of the physical and moral assistance offered by the St. Raphael's Society. The necessity of united action on an international basis was forcefully brought home to its leaders. They recognized that, in spite of gratifying progress, the methods applied were entirely inadequate particularly as long as the organization was confined to only a part of the European countries.

“In 1882, Cahensly went to Genoa to study the Italian emigration problem and then proceeded to Rome to report to Pope Leo XIII on his observations and the aims of the St. Raphael's Society. The Holy Father, apparently very pleased, bestowed his Apostolic Blessing on the Society and its leaders and expressed the desire that an Italian branch be established. Cardinal Simeoni, Prefect of the Propaganda Congregation, also showed deep interest in the important work of the Society and approved the idea of developing it on an international basis. But conditions for the launching of an Italian emigration society at that time were not auspicious – partly because of the political situation in Italia Unita.

“In subsequent years, Cahensly concentrated his efforts more and more on the United States, the destination of several hundred thousand emigrants each year. There things had remained quite stationary as far as care, or lack of it, for the hordes of immigrants was concerned. Organized efforts for their protection were practically non-existent. The Central Verein – and presumably other Catholic groups – worked on a small scale.

“Many recognized the necessity of greater efforts and willing to help, but neither the proper machinery nor the necessary means were at their disposal. The Central Verein was a loose federation of sick-benefit, death-benefit, school and orphanage societies, the members of which, many only a few years in America, were concerned with more immediate problems. Because the income of the treasury was very meager, the local branches throughout the states were asked for contributions in the interest of the immigrants, but the situation reached such a stage where Mr. Koelble, the immigration agent, had to get along on a budget of \$500. In other cities, immigration welfare work ceased entirely.

* * *

“In order to get a clear picture of the situation and to combine whatever forces were available into a concerted effort, Mr. Cahensly, in August 1883, came to America as a delegate of the German St. Raphael's Society, equipped with a warm letter of recommendation from Cardinal Simeoni to Coadjutor-Archbishop Corrigan of New York. The steerage of the Lloyd steamer, on which he traveled, 'was in many respects unsatisfactory as far as moral conditions were concerned. While the cabin passengers were abundantly taken care of, the masses of emigrants were huddled together in the narrow steerage. Too much was done for the passengers in the first cabin and too little for those in steerage' (Cahensly, *Der St. Raphaels-Verein*, also his speech at the Catholic Congress in Amberg).

“Cahensly traveled in the steerage incognito, in order to get first-hand information aboard ship as well as after his arrival in Castle Gardens, New York. 'During my stay of several weeks in New York,' Cahensly writes, 'I visited the Most Rev. Archbishop as well as the pastors of the German churches and a number of prominent German Catholics. Thereafter I attended the annual convention of the Catholic Central Verein at Evansville, Ind., where I found little understanding, however, for the emigration problem. From Evansville I went to St. Louis, the stronghold of German-Americans, then traveled to the State of Arkansas in the South and from there northward to Kansas and Minnesota, to visit the territories where German Catholics are particularly numerous.' He returned to New York via Milwaukee, Cincinnati, Baltimore and Philadelphia. In New York, he succeeded in founding the American St. Raphael's Society. At the head of the society were Archbishop Corrigan as honorary president; Bishop Wigger of Newark as president; Architect Schickel as vice-president; Publisher Joseph Schaefer as treasurer. The new organization at first disappointed the hopes of the founders, and for a time its future seemed doubtful. A propitious change was brought about when the mother society in Germany, in June 1885, sent at its own expense the Rev. J. Reuland, a priest of the Diocese of Luxemburg, as *Vertrauensmann* to New York. 'Father Reuland,' says Cahensly, 'took charge of his mission with great zeal and devoted himself to the cause of the immigrants.' He was added to the board of the New York St. Raphael's Society as its secretary.

“Cahensly spent several months in America. He speaks in his booklet on the history of the St. Raphael's Society of *meinem mehrmonatlichen Aufenthalt* (p.29). Mr. Meng, quoting this passage, translates: 'During a stay of "more than a month"' (*Cath. Hist. Rev.*, vol. 31, p.392), – a lapsus which, insignificant in itself, implies in the context a hasty and superficial study of American conditions. There is no doubt that similar inaccurate 'translations' in more important matters contributed much to misconceptions and misunderstandings in the controversies of the past. –

* * *

“Four years after Cahensly's visit, on February 11, 1887, the conference of German-American priests discussed in one of my former articles took place in Chicago. The conference, convoked by Fr. W. Tappert of Covington to arrange for the first German-American Catholic Congress, took the initial steps for the organization of the German-American Priest's Society and also adopted a resolution submitted by Fr. William Faerber of St. Louis to establish in New York, in commemoration of the sacerdotal jubilee of Pope Leo XIII, a hostel for German Catholic immigrants. It was the Leo House which still exists although having adapted its program to the changed conditions of later days.

“Cahensly had nothing to do with the decisions of that Chicago conference, either with the *Katholikentage* or the Priest's Society. The establishment of the Leo House, of course, fitted perfectly into his program for the protection of emigrants, but it was an American undertaking planned and executed by American priests and laymen. Nevertheless, his visit in America was deftly connected with these and other developments on the American scene as part of the melodramatic story of 'Cahenslyism.'”

* * *

Any readers of Joseph Matt's "Centenary" who are wondering why Joseph Matt felt the need, in 1950 and '51, to set the story straight on Cahensly for justice's sake might be surprised to discover that the defamation of Cahensly continues in popular Catholic histories.

Take, for example, John F. Fink's *Patriotic Leaders of the Church*, published by Our Sunday Visitor in 2004, which offers an “Americanist” view of this country's leading “Americanist” bishops, starting with Archbishop John Carroll.

Fink's profile of Archbishop John Ireland begins: "There have been many deeply patriotic American Catholic prelates, but the prize for the most outspoken in the history of the United States undoubtedly goes to Archbishop John Ireland of St. Paul, Minnesota. He was vigorously pro-American; he was proud of it, and he had not the slightest patience with anybody who was not....

"Toward the close of the nineteenth century, bishops in the United States were split neatly into two schools of thought on questions of nationalism and education. Liberals, or Americanizers, were progressive and in full sympathy with the American way, while the conservatives were more tradition-minded and wanted to follow the European pattern. Archbishop Ireland was leader of the liberals....

Fink goes on to discuss the “memorial” Milwaukee priest Fr. Peter Abbelen submitted to the Propaganda Congregation, how “the German resistance to Americanization soon took the name of Cahenslyism,” misrepresents Cahenslyism as a “plan that would in essence establish a separate German Catholic Church in the United States,” and how the “outcry from Archbishop Ireland was thunderous.

“He lashed out at Cahensly's 'impudence in undertaking under any pretext to meddle in the Catholic affairs of America,’” wrote Fink. “Archbishop Ireland then went on the attack. He was determined to stir up public opinion against Cahenslyism...” – which he did very successfully through his contacts at the *New York Times* and other influential newspapers.

Such was the drama of the times that Cardinal Gibbons even discussed the problem of Cahenslyism with President Benjamin Harrison while both were vacationing at the same resort.

In the end, Fink wrote, “Cahenslyism did eventually die out, and Germans became loyal American citizens who proved their devotion to the United States during World War I. For this, Catholic Americans should be eternally grateful to Archbishop Ireland. While most bishops felt as he did, he bore the brunt of the Cahensly controversy. It can be said that he, together with Cardinal Gibbons, saved the Church from embarrassment and suspicion in 1917, when the United States entered the war. About this fact *The New York Times* stated in 1917: 'The Cahensly movement was a direct outgrowth of pan-Germanism. Many who recall the struggle of the '80s and '90s do not hesitate to say that it was due to Gibbons and Ireland more than any others in the United States that the country went to war with so great a degree of solidarity against the government of one of the great peoples from which the American nation sprang.'”

This false history is a perfect illustration of what Joseph Matt referred to as *Konfessionelle Brunnenvergiftung* – poisoning the wells in the religious sphere. It's a shame the poison is still potent.

###

Last week's installment referred to the resolution of the canonical action Bishop Winand Wigger took against one of his priests, Fr. Patrick Corrigan, pastor of one of the largest churches in the Diocese of Newark, St. Mary's in Hoboken. Wigger had charged Corrigan with defamation, for letters the latter had written to New York's *Freeman's Journal* following a large meeting of German-Catholics in Newark, in which he accused the German-Catholic priests of treason against the United States for their “Cahenslyism,” and accusing Bishop Wigger of favoring Germans at the expense of the

Irish.

In a letter to the *Freeman's Journal*, dated December 14, 1892, Fr. Corrigan stated that he agreed with a New York Times editorial which criticized the recent German-American Congress in Newark concluding: "What we are justified in saying is, that they who took part in those proceedings are bad citizens, and dangerous in proportion as they are powerful." Those bad citizens would include both New York's Archbishop Michael Corrigan and Newark's Bishop Wigger.

Fr. Corrigan also told the *Freeman's Journal*: "The German-American Catholic conventions have created bad blood wherever they have been held, and they should be suppressed as a nuisance...."

Seven years before Bishop Wigger filed his canonical law suit action against Fr. Corrigan, he had suspended Corrigan for publishing a pamphlet in which he advocated that priests of a diocese have the right to elect their bishop when an opening arises.

As we saw last week, there was a reconciliation between Wigger and Corrigan, and Wigger presided at Corrigan's Funeral Mass. The long-running dispute between Wigger and Corrigan, which filled hundreds of column-inches in the *New York Times* through the latter part of the 1880s and the first half of the 1890s, was but a sidebar to a much larger story pushed by the major newspapers in New York, Baltimore, Washington, Chicago and St. Paul, and other cities, on the "Cahensly conspiracy" in which German priests were falsely accused of trying to Germanize – or Prussianize – the United States.

Sixty years after this controversy, the wounds inflicted on the U.S. Church by this controversy were still weeping, which was the reason why Joseph Matt, a recent immigrant from Germany at the time the controversy was raging, and longtime editor of *The Wanderer* devoted such effort to setting the record straight in 1950 and '51.

* * *

Part XXII of his "Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota" provides more background on the "Cahensly conspiracy"; it was published March 15, 1951.

"*Webster's New International Dictionary*, etc., (Springfield, Mass., 1932), gives the following terse definition of 'Cahenslyism': 'A plan proposed to the Pope in 1891 by P.P. Cahensly, a member of the German parliament, to divide the foreign-born population of the United States, for ecclesiastical purposes, according to European nationalities, and to appoint bishops and priests of like race and speaking the same language as the majority of the members of a diocese or congregation. The plan was successfully opposed by the American party in the Church.'

“With a few amendments, adding in particular a reference to the fact that Peter Paul Cahensly acted in behalf of an international Catholic conference – not, as his capacity as a parliamentarian might suggest to suspicious people, in behalf of a political party or the German Government – the definition in the secular reference work can be accepted as accurate. In its simplicity, it is at least more palatable than the paprika hodgepodge still being dished out by some Catholic writers.

“At the outset I wish to make it clear that I do not propose to write an apology of the 'plan' to which Cahensly's name has been tagged. As I have indicated in a former article, and shall discuss in detail later, it was, to some extent, based on false premises, and the manner in which the nationality and language question in the Catholic Church in America was approached from without was criticized not only by 'the American party' but also by contemporary German-American Catholics. What I want to do us, to help clear the memory of that unselfish and intrepid Catholic, Peter Paul Cahensly, of the stigma with which he and highly meritorious work and his good intentions have been branded. The rehabilitation of his name and a thorough justification of those libeled together with him are, unfortunately, impossible without giving the full story of the controversy including the political maneuvers used in defaming and thereby stifling the strongest Catholic group opposed to the teachings of 'Americanism.' This I believe to be in full accord with Father McAvoy's admonition 'to uncover the facts and let the honor and guilt fall where it may.' That is the only procedure by which historical truth and justice can be served and a canker can be removed which for decades has confused and poisoned the interrelations of American Catholics.

* * *

“'Cahenslyism' came into being in 1890. One December 9 and 10 of that year a conference took place at Lucerne, Switzerland, through which a few months later, the American public received the first news of the existence of a man by the name of Peter Paul Cahensly.

“In Germany and other European countries he had been known long before that time as a noble friend and benefactor of Catholic emigrants, the indefatigable Secretary General of the St. Raphael's Society for the Protection of the Catholic German Emigrants,' and the man who had proposed and organized similar societies in Belgium, Austria, Italy, etc.

“In the United States his name was practically unknown outside of German Catholic circles. Cahensly, in 1883, had been here several months to study conditions of Catholic immigrants, had appealed to the convention of the Catholic Central Verein at Evansville, Ind., to take an active interest in their welfare, had discussed the immigration problem

with several Bishops and founded, at New York, an American branch of the St. Raphael's Society. IN the years following his visit in America, he continued, with the methodical perseverance which was part of his nature, his efforts for the welfare of emigrants. He provided at the expense of the German St. Raphael's Society a missionary for the newcomers at New York (Father J. Reuland who through red tape was excluded for seven months, *Festschrift Leo-Haus*, 1914, p. 28 seq.), kept in touch with developments after the German-American Priests' Society had succeeded in bringing about the establishment of the Leo House in New York, and sent an occasional greeting to the Katholikentage and Central Verein conventions.

“Although the controversies dealing with the nationality and language question, the school question, etc., had led to severe conflicts among American Catholics and to bitter attacks on German Catholic endeavors, Cahensly's name had never been connected to them – for the simple reason that Peter Paul Cahensly had nothing to do with these internal American affairs. But when the Lucerne conference brought him into the limelight, the cunning publicity men in charge of the propaganda for 'Americanism' rigged him up as a scapegoat upon whose head – similar to the ancient Jewish ritual (Mos. 3. 16,21) – were placed all sins and iniquities of the recalcitrant opponents of the new philosophy. Thus Peter Paul Cahensly, as a convenient scapegoat, was chased into the wilderness of defamation and contemp. It was a trick not uncommon in party politics and Machiavellian diplomacy but – thank God! – of very rare occurrence in the Catholic realm.

“It seems not likely that the top leaders of 'Americanism' were in favor of these methods or that they were fully aware of the machinations to which the agitators and manipulators behind the scenes resorted – but that does not absolve them of their share of the responsibility. At any rate, in those days of turbulent strife a number of irresponsible men of some influence because of valuable connections were disastrously engaged in shaping public opinion. Their role may be compared with that of Lord Action, Doellinger's coworker and adlatus in the fight against the dogma of Infallibility or, in our own days, of certain Washington key-hole snoopers and radio commentators. Going through the reams of correspondence, diaries and newspaper clippings of the past or searching in the writings of Abbe Maignen, for instance, in the files of Arthur Preuss' *Review* or Tardivel's *Verite*, one is taken aback time and again by the unscrupulousness and scurrility of some of the men who managed to maintain the confidence of eminent leaders. I prefer not to speak of American wire-pullers in Rome: at home, the Rev. George Zuercher of Buffalo, the Rev. David Phelan of St. Louis, and the Rev. John Conway of St. Paul were among the most notorious defamers indulging in the vilest accusations and abuses. The Rev. Conway of the (defunct) *Northwestern Chronicle*, for instance, saw fit to denounce as 'un-American' and predicated on 'Germanization' schemes, the successful fight of the Wisconsin Bishops against the A.P.A.-inspired Bennett school law – which, verbose justification attempts

notwithstanding, was an infringement of parental rights.

“Fanatical and unscrupulous contortionists of this sort had no difficulty to twist the history of the controversies closely interwoven with 'Americanism' into a veritable dime-novel with Peter Paul Cahensly as the villain – a kind of Cagliostro, who connived with Prussian diplomats in a conspiracy not only against the Catholic Church in America, but also against the peace of the Republic. His dangerous designs – so the story continues – were fortunately discovered and frustrated in the religious field under the leadership of Cardinal Gibbons and Archbishop Ireland, in the political field by United States Senator Cushman K. Davis of Minnesota. Readers who may feel inclined to regard this synopsis as a mere satire are respectfully referred particularly to Allen S. Will's *Life of Cardinal Gibbons* (John Murphy Co., Baltimore and New York, 1911) to which I shall pay some attention in a later article. But 'Cahenslyism' still was not dead, according to its enemies. As the antithesis of 'Americanism,' which was claimed to have been its avowed purpose from the beginning, it continued its intrigues in the attempt to avenge its defeat and, with the aid of quarrellsome and abstruse French writers, essayed to impute to 'Americanism' unorthodox teachings.

“This attempt failed, of course, since the condemnation in Pope Leo's breve, *Testem benevolentiae*, although addressed to Cardinal Gibbons, was directed against errors non-existent in America, and the glorious vindication of 'Americanism' was the happy ending of an unpleasant episode.

“That is how a sad chapter of modern history is reflected in the phantasies of a great number of Catholic writers!

* * *

What, in reality, was behind the 'Conspiracy of Lucerne'? I shall begin with the origin of the dispute and reprint the pertinent documents: the ensuing controversy and comments thereon will follow later.

“On December 9 and 10, 1890, the representatives of the European St. Raphael's Society founded up to that time met for a conference at Lucerne. Peter Paul Cahensly represented the German St. Raphael's Society. Bishop Scalabrini of the Italian Society for the Protection of Emigrants at Piacenza delegated its president, Marchese Volpe-Landi, and Father Zaboglio of the Institute for the education of Italian priests for North America. French Catholics were represented by M. Charles Pista of Paris. Baron von Reding-Biberegg represented Switzerland. The Austrian and Belgian St. Raphael's Society excused their absences but signed the agreements of the conference later.

“On the first day, agreements were reached in regard to protective measures in the

interest of emigrants: 1. before their departure from home; 2. in the port of departure; 3. aboard the emigration ships; 4. upon their arrival at their destination. On the second day, Mr. Cahensly reports, 'a document was discussed which Marchese Volpe-Landi had presented. Its purpose was to secure the religious assistance to be accorded to the immigrants of the different nationalities, so that they would be saved for the Catholic religion also in their new homeland. This Memorial was unanimously approved after some minor changes, and Marchese Volpe-Landi and myself [Cahensly] were instructed to submit to the Holy Father the wishes contained therein.

“Pursuant to this Instruction, we went to Rome where we arrived on April 6, 1891. That audience with the Holy Father was, in accordance with a letter of the Maestro di Camera of April 15, arranged for the following day. Unfortunately, however, the Marchese had left Rome on April 15, because of sickness in his family, and I had no choice but to appear alone at the Vatican on April 16 and to submit to the Holy Father the petition of the international conference. The Holy Father received the petition favorably, assuring me that it would be given careful study.' (*Der Raphaels-Verein*, etc., p. 34).

* * *

“The Memorial, by way of introduction, reported on the aims and objects of the St. Raphael's Society and on the Lucerne conference, and then continued:

“In order that European Catholics, in their adopted country, preserve and transmit to their children the faith and its inherent benefits, the undersigned have the honor to submit to Your Holiness the conditions which in the light of experience and the nature of things seem to be indispensable for that purpose. The losses which the Church has suffered in the United States of America number more than ten million of souls.

“1. It seems to be necessary to assemble the emigrant groups of each nationality in separate parishes, churches or missions wherever their numbers and means justify such a practice.

“2. It seems to be necessary to entrust with the administration of these parishes priests of the same nationality to which the faithful belong. Memories of their homeland, sweet and treasured by them, would be ever present and they would love all the more the holy Church which secures for them these benefactions.

“3. In territories settled by emigrants of several nationalities who because of their small numbers are unable to organize separate national parishes, it is desirable that, as far as possible, for these groups a pastor be selected who understands the diverse languages of these groups. This priest should be under strict obligation to teach the catechism to each of the groups in its own language.

“4. It will be particularly necessary to establish parochial schools wherever Christian public schools are not available, and these schools should be, as far as possible, separate for each nationality. The curriculum of these schools should in all cases include the mother-tongue as well as the language and history of the adopted country.

“5. It seems to be necessary to grant to the priests devoting themselves to the emigrants, all rights, privileges and prerogatives, etc., enjoyed by the priests of the country. This measure, which is in accordance with justice, would have the result that zealous, pious and apostolic priests of all nationalities will be trained for emigration work.

“6. It seems to be desirable to establish and encourage societies of different kinds, confraternities, charitable organizations, mutual aid and protection societies, etc. By these means Catholics would be systematically organized and saved from the dangerous sects of Freemasonry and organizations affiliated with it.”

For space reasons, we must continue the re-publication of this document, and Joseph Matt's No. 22 in the series, next week.

###

Continuing with Part XXI of Joseph Matt's “Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota.

Last week's installment ended with Joseph Matt insisting that the German Catholic parliamentarian and founder of the St. Raphael's Society for the aid of Catholic immigrants, Peter Paul Cahensly, had no role in exacerbating tensions that existed in the last decades of the 19th century in the U.S. Church over the language and nationality questions – even though the Americanist bishops and priests used the press, exemplified by the *New York Times*, hurled the charge of “Cahenslyism” at any Catholic not sufficiently “Americanist.”

“In other words,” wrote Matt, “historical research, contrary to Mr. Meng's inconsistent contention, must treat the different phases of the language and nationality conflict separately and carefully distinguish between, on the one hand, the autochthon German-American actions culminating in the St. Louis Memorial of 1884 and the Milwaukee Memorial of 1886, and on the other hand, the sensational controversy caused by the Lucerne conference.

“There was to be sure a third period, the reaction to the unheard-of abuses heaped upon Cahensly and German-American Catholics alike, but this defensive reaction soon was smothered by the all-out offensive of 'Americanism' in the later Nineteenth century.

“To assemble these disputes, following one another in the course of several decades, in one package with the label 'Cahenslyism' is in accordance with the traditional procedure in this matter and undoubtedly facilitates polemics but – to use an expression of the celebrated Langbehn which a Leon Bloy would render more drastically – 'smears' historical truth and leads guileless historians onto the road of combinations and half-truths – particularly those with limited knowledge of essential facts.

* * *

Mr. Meng's two essays on 'Cahenslyism' in *The Catholic Historical Review* (vols. 31 and 32), although not without merit, are typical in this regard. He betrays, at least in the first article, vague ideas about what transpired in the Eighties and gives the following epose of developments after Cahensly's visit:

“Neither the tenor of Cahensly's conversations nor the character of his recommendations appears in available records. Whether the first public move in the demand for greater ecclesiastical autonomy for German-American Catholics came as a result of Cahensly's visits, or whether the juxtaposition of dates was purely coincidental, this author cannot state. Certain it is that less than two months after Cahensly's departure from St. Louis there appeared in the *Pastoralblatt*, German-Catholic newspaper of that city [a monthly review for priests – Ed.] an article on 'Clerical Know-Nothingism' [?] in the American Church. In St. Louis there was a large number of German churches which were under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of English-speaking parishes. They were, in effect, German chapels lacking canonical autonomy. The article in the *Pastoralblatt* condemned this nationalistic discrimination and urged the granting of independence to the German churches. The demand met a receptive audience in the large number of German priests in the archdiocese, led by the vicar general for German, Bohemian and Polish Catholics, the Rev. Henry Muehlsiepen.

“John Gilmary Shea, that learned student of American Catholicism, was quick to recognize some of the implications behind the general movement for German national self-expression which was making itself felt in a number of ways. The undue fostering of national feelings is a great mistake, he held, for it breeds animosity. The rising generation will be American, and it if comes to consider religion a matter of nationality, it will lose its religion along with its nationality. Shea believed that it was happening as he wrote toward the [?] end of 1883. It is “a canker eating away the life of the Church in the United States.” (*Hist. Rev.* 31, p 392-393).

“This is, although Mr. Meng surely did not wish it to be, an example of what Onno Klopp called *Geschichtsbaumeisterei*. The St. Louis Memorial, which, in the paragraph immediately following the foregoing quotation, hemore or less dismisses as a legend, was an indigenous St. Louis product, the origin of which undoubtedly antedated

Cahensly's visit, for the issue had been debated for a long time. Shea's article had not been written 'toward the end of 1883' but was published in July of the same year. It was not, as the loose wording of the reference to it would suggest, a reply to the *Pastoralblatt*. Rather, the *Pastoralblatt* article was very definitely a reply to Mr. Shea's acrimonious attack. Nor is there any indication that it was inspired by Mr. Cahensly. Published in the November 1883 issue of the organ of the German-American priests, it very likely was in the hands of the printer when Mr. Cahensly, apparently in October, came to St. Louis. The St. Louis priests – the Muehlsiepens, Faerbers, Wapelhorsts, Gollers, etc. – were not the kind easily to be swayed by mild-mannered, unassuming Peter Paul Cahensly. They were apparently convinced that the article presented their case forcefully and included a French translation in their petition to Propaganda (*Relatio*, p. 74).

* * *

“The *Pastoralblatt* article itself is the best proof that the controversy had not been caused by Mr. Cahensly's visit to St. Louis. It deals with grievances of old standing which had been aggravated by Mr. Shea's unkind accusations and insinuations. It complains of the unfair treatment of German parishes, of attacks on the German parochial schools, 'odious charges that are hurled at two thousand priests...who speak the German language' and suspicion cast on 'American bishops born in this country,' etc. It recalls that 'Canon law emphatically declares that one can lawfully and validly take charge of a parish or any other office with which the care of souls is connected, unless he thoroughly understands and speaks the language of the people entrusted to his care.' It quotes a circular letter of Pope Pius IX on July 3, 1847, sent to the American bishops in regard to the pastoral care of the many German immigrants and a similar instruction of the Propaganda, on March 5, 1866, in regard to German Catholics in Chicago, etc.

“The *Pastoralblatt* article, however, was militant only in parts; it tried to allay fears and pleaded for peace and harmony. It said:

“The fear of new Germany, of the perpetuation of an un-American clanishness of German Catholics, is altogether without foundation. As a rule, the German in this country soon makes himself at home, and becomes as good an American citizen as those of any other nationality. He has as much love for free American institutions. German children are known to learn the English language very fast; and if a German school wishes to thrive, it must teach English thoroughly. Should the managers of the school, through national prejudice, neglect to have English taught, the parents would insist upon having it taught, as regard must be had to the future welfare of their children, which makes the study of English an imperative necessity for business purposes. Let us, therefore, allow things quietly to take their course and to develop in a natural manner. Forcible, premature interference is always dangerous. “In nature, there is no leap.” Let

us cheerfully permit our descendants to settle those questions. When once immigration has entirely ceased, and there lives a generation that has been reared up here with its priests, the English language will also be gradually adopted in the churches.

“The best policy for the present [1883] would be, that as children of our Mother, the Catholic Church, we should live together peaceably, like true Catholics, according to the spirit of the Church ('where there is neither Greek nor barbarian'); that all, bishops, priests and people should become large-hearted; that they should not be first American, Irish or German, and then Catholic; that they should be more solicitous for the salvation of souls than for the preservation of the German or English language; and that no one should disregard the words of the Chief Pastor of souls, Jesus Christ: Seek ye the kingdom of God and its justice and all else will be added unto ye. It would be very dangerous, through zeal for one's mother tongue, to disregard this admonition of the Eternal Wisdom; it would be dangerous and foolish to wish, at present, forcibly to solve these delicate questions and complications by suppressing, slighting, disenfranchising the people of any nationality.' (The translation is taken from the *Relatio* where it appears under the heading, 'The Future of Foreign-born Catholics.')

“Those were the sentiments pervading the endeavors to arrive at a fair settlement of one of the deplorable disputes in the 'fermentation' of the period. The traditional method of bringing the nationality and language conflict under the common denominator of 'Cahenslyism' and denouncing it as a 'plot,' a 'conspiracy,' 'anti-Americanism,' 'pan-Germanism,' is superficial as well as unjust and should, at last, give way to a true evaluation.

“Next week, I will discuss the 'Lucerne Conspiracy.'”

* * *

Last week's installment concluded with a headline from the *New York Times* and a snip of the report on the canonical lawsuit filed by Bishop Winand Wigger of Newark against one of his priests, Fr. Patrick Corrigan of Hoboken.

The front page headline of December 12, 1892, readers may recall, ominously warned: "GRAVE ISSUES INVOLVED: Vast Importance of the Trial of Father Corrigan; The Most Precious Interests of the Catholic Church at Stake -- Progressive and Conservative Elements at War -- Little Chance of a Fair Trial"

According to the report: “.....It may well be said that the trial this afternoon and the causes which have led up to are the most extraordinary events in the history of the Roman Catholic Church in this country. The most precious interests of the Church are at stake. The result and the developments of the trial will affect the influence, aye, the very

life, of the Church in this country....”

So what became of the trial that would set the fate of the Catholic Church in the United States?

On December 18, 1892, the *New York Times* reported that Bishop Wigger suspended the trial, upon receiving an apology from Fr. Corrigan.

The headline read: “CORRIGAN'S TRIAL ENDED: A Letter from the Priest Received As Full Apology. In Response to the overtures of mutual friends he expresses regret for any disrespect to Bishop Wigger or the Archbishop -- A prompt acceptance.”

In his letter to Bishop Wigger, dated December 17, 1892, Fr. Corrigan wrote:

“Right Rev. Dear Bishop: Having received kindly suggestions from mutual friends who have consulted you and extended to me advice that I highly appreciate, I am glad to yield whatever may justly be expected of me to put an end to this controversy.

“Nothing would give more annoyance than to have been guilty of violating the respect due to you and also to the Most Rev. Metropolitan Archbishop Corrigan, and wherever I have unintentionally gone beyond the proper bounds, I hereby express my regret for it, and pray both of you to overlook it.

“I believe that you have tried to be just in the administration of your diocese, and I am satisfied that whatever mistakes you may have made did not proceed from malice.

“As regards the future, you need have no apprehension that I have any intention of attacking yourself or your government in the papers,

“Your servant in Christ,
“Patrick Corrigan”

* * *

A little more than a year later, Fr. Corrigan died. The *New York Times* reported his Funeral Mass on January 13, 1894, with Bishop Wigger presiding.

Dated Jersey City, January 12, the report read: “The funeral of Father Corrigan took place today from the Church of St. Mary, Our Lady of Grace, of which he was for many years pastor. The hour set was 9:30, but the church doors were thrown open at 8 o'clock. Half an hour later the edifice was crowded. When the services began, the pews and aisles were packed, and the vestibule was an impenetrable mass of mourners.

“In addition, many persons were kneeling on the church steps. There was such a crowd in the streets that it was impossible to get near the edifice. The police requested the crowd to move into Church Square Park across the street, which many of them did, and there hundreds knelt and prayed for their dead pastor.

“The services in the church began with the office of the dead, which was chanted by the priests at 9:30. The Mass for the dead began at 10 o'clock, over 100 priests occupying the chancel and the front pews....

“Bishop Wigger decided that deference to the friends of Father Corrigan required him to disregard Father Corrigan's wish that there should be no eulogy. This morning he directed Father Cody to prepare a discourse. The sermon was brief.

“Father Cody said it was needless to speak of Father Corrigan's good deeds at length, because every one knew him and knew what he had done for the Church and for the poor of Hoboken.

“He spared himself in no way; no task was too great for him, no labor too difficult. he was zealous in the conversion of souls from sin to the worship of God. For himself, when he was called he was ready. As he lived, so he died, a faithful servant of Christ.

“The music was peculiarly solemn and impressive. It was conducted by John Keefe, the organist, assisted by the full choir and the Choral Union. The programme was as follows:

1. Clarinet solo, largo....Handel, Signor Rinaldi.
2. Marche Funebre, I minor, Chopin.
Orchestra, (McDermontt's, 22 pieces,) organ, trio, four trombones and kettle drum.
3. Dies Irae, I minor....Cherubini. Choir.
4. Offertory, O, Jesu Mi, (from Attila, Verdi. Mrs. M.V. McDermott, soprano, Mr. Charles Smith, tenor, and Nat Hicks, basso.
5. Sanctus....Eiegan Quintet.
Ave....Falkenstein, Tenor obligato.
6. Agnus Dei, I minor...Gregorian Chant. Choir.
7. De Profundis...Gregorian Chant. Choir.
8. Libera Nos....Mueler. Quartet and chor.
9. Funeral March....Mendelssohn. Orchestra.

“When the Mass was concluded, Bishop Wigger pronounced the final absolution.

“The casket was borne from the church the hearse by Mayor Fagan, Charles J. Donovan....(etc).

“The funeral cortege consisted of the societies belonging to the church, after which came 150 carriages containing the clergy, family and friends of the dead priest.

“The streets from the church to the city line were thronged with mourners, who reverently bowed their heads and lifted their hats as the procession passed....”

* * *

The conflict between the Irish and German Catholics and their priests, and the Wigger-Corrigan case, is told well by Seton Hall history professor Dermot Quinn in his *The Irish in New Jersey: Four Centuries of American Life* (Rutgers University Press, 2004).

Behind the ecclesiastical conflict, naturally was a political battle: the Irish ruled City Hall, and the Irish priests sided with Protestants on the matter of Sunday drinking laws. The Germans, once they attained a certain political strength, overturned the prohibition on drinking in public on Sundays, so families and friends could enjoy themselves at their after-Mass beer gardens.

###

We resume with last week's No. 22 of Joseph Matt's “Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota,” on Cahenslyism, in which Matt reproduced the full text of the Lucerne Memorial of December 1890.

Following the conclusion, *The Wanderer* will reproduce some of the *New York Times*' reports on the Lucerne Memorial, which will allow readers to judge for themselves Matt's charge that Peter Paul Cahensly was libeled and defamed and the Lucerne Memorial was misrepresented by the “Americanist” party in the U.S. Church for political purposes.

Last week's installment ended with the 6th item of the Memorial. We continue with the 7th.

“7. It seems to be desirable that the Catholics of each nationality have, where this is considered feasible, in the episcopate of the country a few Bishops of the same national origin. It seems that the ecclesiastical organization would thus be perfect. In the gatherings of the Bishops, Councils, etc., every immigrated nationality would be represented and its interests and needs would be safeguarded.

“8. The undersigned, finally, wish to point out that, for the attainment of the objectives which they have enumerated, it would be very desirable, and that they urge, that the Holy See foster and protect in all emigration countries: (a) special seminaries and

apostolic schools training emigration missionaries; (b) the St. Raphael's Societies for the Protection of Emigrants, and that it recommend to the Most. Rev. Bishops to establish such societies in the emigration countries wherever they do not yet exist, and that the Holy See place them under the protection of a Cardinal-Protector.

“The undersigned expect of this organization and the proposed measures the most happy and immediate results. Emigration missionaries trained under the direction of an excellent Italian Bishop have already gone to America. Others, members of neighboring nations, are waiting, before entering upon their important and holy calling, that the Supreme Shepherd of the Church, by a decree of his wisdom, guarantee the free exercise of their mission. If the Holy See will lend its indispensable cooperation, wonderful results may ensue. The poor emigrants will find on American soil their priests, their parishes, their schools, their societies, their language, and thus cannot fail to extend the boundaries of the reign of Christ on earth.

“The undersigned, solemnly professing their loyalty to the Apostolic See, humbly beg Your Holiness to grant paternal approbation of the proposals submitted for the different American countries for the salvation of souls and for the glory of our holy mother, the Church, in the different American countries.

“With the most loyal devotion Your most humble and obedient sons:

“The Executive Committee of the German St. Raphael's Society: Prince Carl zu Isenberg-Birstein; Cahensly, M.P.; Count Preysing; Baron von Buol; Baron Franz von Schorlemer; Dr. Lingens, M.P.; Attorney Ed. Mueller; Count Loe; Eugen Haffner; Baron von Wendt.

“The Executive Committee of the Austrian St. Raphael's Society: Prince von Schwarzenberg; Dr. Willard Klopp; Baron von Linde; Count zur Lippe; Count Chorinsky; Baron von Vittinghoff-Schell; Dr. von Sas-Krechowiecky; Count Zabeo; Count Sylva-Tarouca.

“The Executive Committee of the Belgian St. Raphael's Society: Senator Leon van Ockerhout; Count Waldbott-Bassenehim; Baron Ruzette; Prince de Rubempre; Count Albert de Ribiano; Duke d'Ursel; Count de Fre.

“The Executive Committee of the Italian St. Raphael's Society: Marchese G. Volpe-Landi; Marchese Frederico Landi; Count Medolaga di Bergamo; Count Alessandro Monandi; Marchese Balestrina Battista de Lucca; Prince L. Buoncampagni; Count Eduardo Soderini.”

Joseph Matt continued: “The petition was also signed by M. Plista, France, who had

attended the conference at Lucerne but felt he could only indorse it in his own behalf, not in behalf of the French St. Raphael's Society which was not as yet formally constituted. A copy of the Memorial was enclosed with the original. It was signed in the interest of the many French-Canadians living in the United States by prominent Canadian Catholics who at that time were traveling in Europe, namely Prime Minister H. Mercier, Quebec, Minister of Finances J. Shehyn, Quebec, and thirteen other Canadians.

* * *

“The story of the origin of the Memorial and Petition,' Mr. Cahensly said (*Der St/ Raphaels-Verein*, p. 40), 'proves the inaccuracy of the first news reports from Rome (the Wolff Bureau) which named the German St. Raphael's Society as the sole author. It was actually a memorial of international character and for international purposes in which the Italian, Slav and Canadian Catholics with their recent strong emigration to the United States were, probably, even more interested than the Germans. In contrast to the latter [and the French?, ed], these nationalities had only a small number of priests understanding their language, and they were not represented in the hierarchy. In 1890, the number of emigrants from Austria-Hungary was 154,582; from Russia, 55,245; from Italy, 58,343. The number of emigrants from Germany was 77,188, of whom, at the most, 30,000 were Catholics.'

“A few months later' (according to the *Leo-Haus Festschrift*, p.20), a supplementary Memorial was sent to Cardinal Rampolla. Cahensly's report on it (*St. Raphaels-Verein*, p.42) is as follows:

“The Papal Secretary of State, His Eminence Cardinal Rampolla, in a private audience had expressed the wish to receive more detailed information and statistics in regard to the important emigration problem. Replying to this request, a memorial signed by myself and Marchese Volpe-Landi was submitted. One we two personally, and not the European St. Raphael's Societies, are responsible for this Memorial which has raised so much dust in America and has caused so many false interpretations.

“This Memorial [submitted June 1, 1891, Ed.] begins as follows:

“Your Eminence:

“We obediently submit some considerations in regard to the emigration to America. This important question involves interests of great significance from the social as well as the religious point of view. A continuously rising flood carries people of different countries to America. Statistical figures attached to this document show that in the year 1889 439,400 Catholics emigrated to America. Of

these, 178,000 went to North America which, in addition, received thousands of immigrants from Canada, Mexico, Brazil and other South American countries. Calculations based on most reliable informations show that the Catholic immigrants and their descendants should have brought the Catholic population of North America to twenty-six millions. The actual number of Catholics in that great country, however, is hardly higher than ten millions. Accordingly, Catholicism in the great American Republic up to now has suffered a loss of sixteen million souls. The following are the chief causes of the Catholic losses.

“1. The lack of adequate protection for the emigrants at the time of their departure from home, during the journey to their destination, and upon their arrival in America.

“2. The lack of priests and parishes for the different nationalities among the immigrants.

“3. The frequently exorbitant financial sacrifices expected of the faithful.

“4. The public State schools.

“5. The lack of organizations, Catholic and national societies for mutual aid, protection, etc., for the laboring classes.

“6. The lack of representatives of the different nationalities of the immigrants in the hierarchy.”

“Three more documents will be published next week.”

* * *

On June 3, 1891, the *New York Times* published a report, headlined, "THE LUCERNE PETITION: Its Authorship Denied By The German Priests; A Story that is likely to result in a good deal of litigation among American Catholics: Father Phelan's Statement.”

Datelined St. Louis, the story opened: “The Lucerne petition to the Vatican asking for the adoption of a policy of nationalizing the Catholic Church in America has caused a controversy that promises to take a very wide range and develop some decidedly sensational features.

“As stated in a dispatch to *The Times*, Father Phelan, editor of the *Western Watchman*, says the matter originated here among members of the association of German priests. of which the Very Rev. Henry Muhlsiepen is the head. Father Muhlsipen consented, after reading Father Phelan's statement, to discuss the matter. He said:

“I know nothing of the “Lucerne petition” beyond what I have read in the papers. There has never been any discussion of such a movement among the German Catholic clergy

of the United States, and there surely has been no correspondence whatever with the Zurich Catholics, with Cahensly, or with anyone else, as to the preparation or presentation of such a petition or of any other. The Deutsche-Amerikanischen Priesterverein, of which I am the head, was organized four years ago, and the sole cause for its organization was to provide for and conduct the annual German Catholic Congress...There has never been any element of secrecy in the meetings of this society, and surely if such a paper had originated with its membership, or at its councils, the fact would have been generally known....

“I cannot believe, anyway, that the paper known as the Lucerne petition has been correctly reported in this country....The reports state that another feature of the petition provides for the establishment of “national” schools in America where the children of immigrants shall be taught the language and manners of their parents. This expression “national” I think conveys a wrong impression. I do not believe it is intended to teach the children their parents' language exclusively. It is simply to provide against the children being entirely cut off from their parents as they would be if educated in ignorance of that mother tongue which their parents speak.

“I cannot understand what reason Father Phelan can have for his attack upon the German Priests' Society of this city. It has taken no part in such a movement...It knows nothing about it beyond what has been published, and does not owe its existence to any anti-American spirit of any struggle with authority with the American clergy. All those charges are false, and do the society a great injustice.”

The report continued, with a rebuttal from Fr. Phelan [a “notorious defamer,” according to Joseph Matt,], who “expressed surprise” at Fr. Muhlsiepen's assertions and denials, telling the *Times*: “I can only emphasize the fact stated before, that the Lucerne petition originated here in St. Louis. Why, St. Louis is known to the priesthood of the whole country as the very hotbed of this agitation, and this man as the prime mover in the matter....No amount of denial will now alter the case.” Phelan continued by telling the *Times* that the German Priests' Society would not even be content with American-born German bishops, but wanted German bishops appointed to the United States!

On August 22, 1891, the *Times* published another story, headlined, “Dr. Baumgarten in St. Louis: He Denies That He Is There to Further Cahensly's Scheme.”

This report, also datelined St. Louis, opened: “Last Saturday's Berlin cables gave a detailed account of the alleged secret mission of Dr. Paul Baumgarten, a young divinity student who had taken minor orders at Rome, and who, it was alleged, was on his way to St. Louis to have a conference with the leaders of the Priester Verein, the purpose of which was to assist in furthering the objects set forth in the now celebrated Cahensly or Lucerne petition.

“It was insinuated that young Baumgarten had made various unsuccessful attempts to secure diplomatic and other honors from the Pope, in order to invest his coming to America with something of a political dignity; that having failed to become a Monseigneur, or Little Monseigneur, and having failed also in having himself selected as the Pope's Ambassador to the approaching jubilee of Archbishop Kenrick of this city, he had nevertheless set out for America to assist Cahensly as far as possible and to test the temper of the American hierarchy on the nationalization question.

“Dr. Baumgarten arrived in St. Louis to-day, and entered a vigorous denial of all the charges and assertions made in the cable letter. He declared that he was here merely to spend his vacation in America, and in response to an invitation extended last Spring by a number of St. Louis friends. He disclaimed in the most emphatic manner having been the promoter of the Cahensly petition. The memorial, he said, was not even drawn up by Cahensly, but was drafted by the representative of the Italian Strahheil Societies at the Lucerne Conference....”

* * *

Another article, from the *Sunday Times Magazine* of June 3, 1917, two-and-a-half months after the U.S. declared war on Germany (on Good Friday of that year, of all days!) explained, “How Cardinal Gibbons Fought Pan Germans: Recent Events Show that His Opposition To Use Of Foreign Languages in Church Service Has Fostered American Unity.”

This unsigned report opened: “The war has brought into strong relief the real proportions of the perhaps the chief public service performed by Cardinal Gibbons -- his long fight for 'Americanism' in the organization of the Catholic Church in this country. Had he lost, the national unity which we see today would have been impossible, in the opinion of those who have made a study of the subject....

“Many who recall the struggle in the eighties and early nineties do not hesitate to say that it is due to him more than to any other man that the United States is going to war with so great a degree of solidarity against the Government of one of the great peoples from which the American nation has sprung.

“Champions of the so-called Cahensly movement, which originated in Germany and was German in its main aspects throughout, demanded that all the foreigners within the fold of the Catholic Church in the United States in 1890 and all who might come thereafter, and the descendants of all these, be organized as separate parish units in order to maintain unbroken their ties with their respective fatherlands....

“[Gibbons] had taken note of the Cahensly agitation in its beginnings and had seen clearly the immense possibilities of danger involved in its ambitious designs. A divided America, in or out of the Catholic Church, was abhorrent to him....”

The report also said that Gibbons was supported by his friends and co-workers, Archbishop Ireland and Bishop Keane, “who vigorously combated in Rome the work which the Cahenslyites were carrying on with energy.”

The article concluded: “The Church was, therefore, vulnerable to the insidious and powerful force which Cahenslyism represented. The difficulty must be admitted of saying to the foreigner that, while perpetuating in America the religious life to which he had been accustomed in his native country, the Church extend to him no sympathy in the retention of his political ideals and aspirations; that, in fact, so far as it exerted any influence over him in this respect in must be in the direction of complete assimilation of all foreign elements into an American political unit that knows no allegiance, in thought, word or deed, to any earthly sovereignty except that of the United States. How difficult, also, was it to say to the German Catholic, who had been identified with the Centrist Party in his native home, that in America the fundamental law of the land was a writ of divorcement of religion and politics!”

###

We continue with No. XXIII of Joseph Matt's “Centenary of Catholic History in Minnesota,” originally published March 22, 1951, on “Cahenslyism”:

“The Lucerne Memorial, the full text of which was reproduced in last week's issue, caused much excitement in the United States. If the facts had been reported honestly and impassionately, thee still would have been criticism and resentment for more than one reason, but the Catholic life of our country might have been spared a deplorable scandal – and the controversy on 'Americanism' might have taken a more propitious course making the salutary influence of *Testem benevolentia* felt to this day.

“The history of the intemperate attacks on Cahensly, the defamation of every opposition to the innovations fostered by 'Americanism', and the denunciations of this opposition under the expedient propaganda label of 'Cahenslyism', will be treated separately and in their interrelations, in subsequent articles. For the moment, I wish to confine myself to the reproduction of several important documents which (together with a letter of Cardinal Ledochowski, the new Prefect of the Propaganda, of May 15th, 1892, confirming, in effect, Cardinal Rampolla's subjoined letter of June 28th, 1891 practically disposed of the Lucerne Memorial – and of 'Cahenslyism' as far as Cahensly's connection with the Memorial justified, to an extent, the use of his name.

“The most interesting thing among the following documents is the letter of Cardinal Rampolla of April 23, 1892. It deserves particular attention because writers against 'Cahenslyism' usually either suppress it entirely or, if they mention it at all, obscure and distort its contents and significance. The three documents are closely connected with each other. The first is a letter of Cardinal Rampolla to Cardinal Gibbons, the purpose of which obviously was to allay the excitement in the United States, partly the result of propaganda not justified by the facts of the case. The second is a diplomatic complaint of the St. Raphael's societies in the form of a reply to the Cardinal's letter. The third is an answer to Cardinal Rampolla, in which the authors of the alleged 'Conspiracy of Lucerne' are assured that the Holy See had never doubted their integrity. What does the testimony of the Holy See make of those who persisted, and those who still persist, in their wild diatribes and insinuations?! –

* * *

According to the *Moniteur de Rome*, Cardinal Rampolla's letter to Cardinal Gibbons, of June 28th, 1891, read as follows:

“Your Eminence:

“The Holy Father can but be pleased to see that societies are organized for the purpose of rendering assistance for the material and particularly the religious welfare of the great numbers of Catholic emigrants to America. Information has reached us, however, that some of the societies, for instance, the German St. Raphael's Society, are advocating among the means for the attainment of these purposes the proposal to give each group of emigrants, according to nationality, separate representatives in the American episcopate. Reports from America indicate strong opposition to such a plan and speak of the intention on the part of the episcopate to deal with this matter in special assemblies.

“The Apostolic See, however, upon careful consideration, finds that the plan is neither opportune nor necessary. It furthermore does not believe that a change ought to be made in the practice followed heretofore in supplying the numerous American dioceses with saintly pastors, but will, in all justice, give consideration to the proposals of the episcopate.

“The Holy Father, therefore, has requested me to address myself to Your Eminence not only dissuade you from encouraging or assisting this moved caused by unfounded fear, but also to beg of you to strive, in conjunction with your brethren in the episcopate, for the restoration of peace, being assured that the Sovereign Head of the Church is not inclined to accept any proposal which in the least could give cause for misgivings, while the pastoral care of the Catholic emigrants from different countries can be entrusted to national parish priests as is already the customary practice.

“Carrying out the instruction conveyed to me by His Holiness, I have the honor to renew the assurance of deep devotion....’ [Ellipsis in original Matt article]

* * *

“Because,’ as Cahensly writes (*Der St. Raphaels-Verein*, p. 46), ‘this document gave evidence of several misunderstandings, the European St. Raphael’s societies, in the middle of April, 1892, addressed a new memorial to His Eminence Cardinal Rampolla.’ The text of this memorial was as follows:

“Your Eminence:

“Newspapers in Rome some time ago published a letter Your Eminence addressed to His Eminence Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore, in regard to the memorial submitted in April of last year to the Holy Father in behalf of the European St. Raphael’s societies.

“With great satisfaction we have taken cognizance of the fact that the Holy Father approves the societies which have been established for the temporal and spiritual protection of the many Catholic emigrants to America.

“The newspapers report, furthermore, a remark of Your Eminence to the effect that certain associations, for instance the German society, held that it is one of the most effective means for the achievement of their purpose to grant to each national group of emigrants a special representation in the American episcopate. We do not know whether this passage of the letter is rendered correctly [in the newspaper reports]. Since, however, it gives rise, not only to criticism hardly in accord with the spirit of Christian charity, but also to dangerous attacks on the institution itself, we beg leave of Your Eminence briefly to relate our position.

“We have felt particularly hurt by the accusation that we wanted to interfere in the internal administration of the Church; moreover, that, by proposing national Bishops with jurisdiction over the faithful of the same nationality, we wanted to overthrow the hierarchical order prevailing in the United States. It will suffice to reiterate the pertinent sentence in our Memorial, to prove that this assumption is wrong; it is not in accord with our intentions nor with our Catholic sentiments. We stated:

“It seems very desirable that the Catholics of every nationality have in the episcopate of the country, where this is considered to be feasible, a few bishops of the same religion.

“The meaning of this wish surely cannot be doubtful when expressed in a document

addressed to the Father of Christianity.

“We explain with Catholic frankness the dangers which we know from our experience in emigration matters, and we submit to the sublime wisdom and inspired judgment of the Holy Father some means which appear to us to be helpful in removing or reducing the spiritual perils connected with the emigration problem. We confined ourselves within the limits of our duty, to express a wish, namely, the wish to see how the highest authority would consider the possibility, if circumstances permit, of granting in the American episcopate to the different nationalities one or more Bishops of their own nationality.’

* * *

“This address was signed by members of the executive committees of the German, Austrian, Belgian and Italian St. Raphael's societies. Cardinal Rampolla replied within a few days, on April 23rd, 1892, in a letter to Prince Isenburg-Birstein, president of the German St. Raphael's Society, as follows:

“Your Highness:

“I have received the address signed by Your Highness and many eminent members not only of your own society, but also of the societies devoting themselves in different countries to the emigration of Catholics to the United States of America. Because of its importance, this document deserved to be presented to the Holy Father and I have not failed to attend to this duty. I now am therefore in the position to notify Your Highness that His Holiness has with satisfaction received the explanations contained in the address, – explanations which confirm the integrity of sentiments animating the signers and which, let me add, never had been doubted.

“Confident that you will continue as good Catholics to protect your emigrating coreligionists and that you will always readily abide by the decisions which the Bishops and particularly the Holy See will make in the interest of the emigrants, His Holiness from the fullness of his heart imparts to the different societies mentioned in the above address as well as to every individual member, the Apostolic Blessing.

“Conveying this message to Your Highness, I have the honor of assuring you of my high esteem.

“Your Highness Obedient Servant,
“M. Cardinal Rampolla.’

And thus concludes No, XXIII of Matt's “Centenary.”

* * *

Several weeks ago, while searching on the Internet for information on some of the names mentioned by Joseph Matt in this series, this reporter came across a digital collection of several years of Arthur Preuss' *The Review*, from the early 1900s.

Preuss, of St. Louis, was a journalist and a scholar of the first rank, and his *Review* was just that, a review of art, music, liturgy, theology, historical research, novels, plays, newspaper articles, scholarly journals, etc.

Among the items he published, not written by him but a contributor, was this, from No. 1, Vol. 8, 1901, in reference to the heat Timothy Cardinal Dolan has taken in recent weeks for “paying off” some abusive priests in Milwaukee while he was prelate there, to facilitate their removal from the priesthood:

“A Priest's Suicide and the National Home for Incapacitated Clergymen.

“A Minnesota confrere sends us a cutting from the St. Paul *Globe* of March 8th, in which the tragic suicide of Rev. Francis J. Budzikowski, of the Diocese of Duluth, is detailed in all its horror. Rev. Budzikowski shot himself through the heart in a Minneapolis hotel, and despondency is believed to have prompted the terrible act. On his person was, among other papers, a letter from Bishop McGolrick, as follows :

“Duluth, Feb. 2,

“Rev. and Dear Sir : I shall have no further use for your services in this Diocese after the 27th of this month. Your faculties are hereby withdrawn after that date. Hoping that you will find a suitable place in another diocese, I am, yours, James McGolrick.’

“A telegram from Duluth stated that Rev. B. 'was discharged because he showed signs of mental aberration and was not attending to his work. There were no charges against him.’

“What about a national home for incapacitated priests? – we are asked in this connection. We answer by another question: What about a bishop that is guilty of sending away a priest of his diocese without any means of support, for no other reason than that the priest is mentally deranged? As we do not know that Bishop McGolrick is guilty of this crime – newspaper reports are no evidence – we simply wish to give a general answer. By his ordination to the priesthood, the bishop is a brother to every other priest; by his elevation to the episcopate, the bishop becomes a father to every priest in his diocese. If we consider the relation of a brother, a bishop who sends away a

demented priest without any support, acts worse than Cain did in killing Abel. If we consider him as a father of his priests, who dismisses a lunatic son without taking care of him, the crime of Jacob's sons selling their brother Joseph is an act of mercy compared to such heinous conduct.

“We hope Bishop McGolrick can plead 'not guilty' before God and men. But were he guilty, it would not prove the necessity of a national home for retired priests, but rather of a place where a retired bishop could do penance. – J.F, Meifuss.”

* * *

And then there is this by Preuss, from Vol. 8 No. 2., a snip from a larger book review on academic texts, which, again, seems highly relevant in relation to the flap over Sr. Margaret Farley's text *Just Love*:

“I happen to know personally a good deal of the professors of German in this country, but I know not one who is a Catholic. On the other hand, however, there are a good many Catholic youths in our colleges who have to use such textbooks in which the Catholic faith is ridiculed. These boys are less in number, and, therefore, not courageous enough to protest against a misinterpretation of Catholic dogmas, etc. Then the time passes by, a second and a third attack is made against the Catholic Church, and when the senior bids farewell to his Alma Mater, he is ashamed of showing himself publicly as a Catholic, i. e., he is practically lost to the Church. Even the benevolent trick which is played by some colleges upon Catholic parents to make them forget the serious dangers to which their boys are exposed, i. e., the engaging of a (liberal) priest to preach a sermon in the college chapel or to give a lecture to the students, even this trick does not help.

“We must have textbooks written by Catholic scholars. They must not be aggressive as far as non-Catholic opinions or doctrines are concerned, but Catholic doctrines must not be suppressed....

“Nor is this all. In order to bring up a generation of college-trained people, we need institutions governed in the Catholic spirit, but not governed by Catholic orders. It is a fact that no Catholic layman can find an engagement as teacher in any college of our country. We must found institutions of higher learning where laymen can work according to their Catholic principles. We have enough of these men around in the country, and the boys who come out of such an institution would be more fit to cope with attacks made against their Catholic principles, than men who have been trained within the walls of some cloister-school to which non-Catholic boys are not admitted.

“Yale, Harvard, Princeton, etc., have Catholic pupils: do the latter come back as loyal

Catholics after they graduate? One hundred apologetical sermons delivered by a holy bishop can not repair the damage done to these young men or women by textbooks written in a spirit hostile to the Catholic faith, and the number of apostates produced in this way exceeds by far the number of converts. But it is not my business nor does it lie in my power to stop the evil – it lies with our episcopate, and even if the number of students who flocked, up to now, to the colleges managed by ecclesiastical orders, should decrease, it would be a gain to the Church en masse, if every diocese would open one college managed by competent laymen. The market of school literature would be no longer controlled by non-Catholic or anti-Catholic publishers and authors....”

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Continuing with Joseph Matt's “Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota,” Part XXIV, published in *The Wanderer*, March 29, 1951, on “Cahenslyism.”:

“Cardinal Rampolla's letter of June 28, 1891, to Cardinal Gibbons, together with the letter Cardinal Mieczyslaw von Ledochowski addressed to Cardinal Gibbons on May 15, 1892, soon after his appointment as Prefect of the Propaganda, disposed of the Lucerne Memorial.

“There was not much left to be decided. The vehement opposition to every phase of the Lucerne conference – the nature and purpose of which from the very beginning had been completely distorted by a reckless propaganda – had crushed the Memorial into an entangled mass of misconceptions and misconstructions. One after another of its propositions had been eliminated from the discussion in quick succession and without much ado. Little, if any, attention had been paid to a number of constructive proposals – the methodical grouping of the emigrants before their departure, the settlement of these groups in parishes already in existence and the establishment of new parishes where necessary, the training of priests for the particular task of pastoral care of emigrants, etc.

“Whatever had been suggested at Lucerne to meet a very complicated problem was, a priori, denounced as part of a sinister scheme, a nationalistic and political 'conspiracy' which tried to interfere with affairs of the Catholic Church in America and particularly with the selection of American bishops. In view of the excited American protests, the latter issue was stressed in the letters of Cardinal Rampolla and Cardinal Ledochowski, the new Prefect of the Propaganda again reassuring the American hierarchy that it was the desire of the Holy See that American bishops be chosen in accordance with the procedures prescribed by the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, and that there was no intention of infringing upon the jurisdiction of the American episcopate.

“The complaint of the European St. Raphael's Societies of April, 1892, (see text in last week's issue), also confined itself mainly to the essential accusation of intrusive and

exaggerated demands in regard to the appointment of bishops. John J. Meng, in the second of his articles ('Cahenslyism: The Second Chapter,' *Cath. Hist. Review*, vol. 32), in which, by the way, he subtly corrects some of his former loose statements, devotes several paragraphs to this complaint, quoting its salient passages in the original German text (plus some typographical errors) unaccompanied by a translation for the benefit of those unable to read German, and continues: 'Rampolla acknowledged the communication on April 28 [?], 1892 with a non-committal letter to the President of the German St. Raphael's Verein. Count [?] Isenburg Birstein. He stated that the letters had been submitted to Leo XIII, and the re-translation referred to had been accepted at its face value.'

“Mr. Meng 'quotes' Cahensly's booklet (*Der St. Raphaels-Verein*, etc. pp. 47-48), indicating that he had Cardinal Rampolla's letters before him. It is the same letter which I translated for last week's article, and in which Cardinal Rampolla said that the Holy Father had been pleased 'with the explanations contained in the address – explanations which confirm the integrity of the sentiments animating the signers and which, let me add, had never been doubted.' Mr. Meng obviously 'translated' *Auseinandsetzungen* (explanations) with 're-translation', which of course, is something entirely different, thus adding another gem to his 'translation' of *mehrmonatlich* (of several months) with 'more than a month.' Moreover, the letter of His Eminence is not quite as 'non-committal' as the very free summary in Mr. Meng's article suggests.

“Apparently unimpressed by the assurance of Cardinal Rampolla that the Holy See had 'never doubted' the integrity of the men connected with the alleged 'conspiracy of Lucerne', Mr. Meng continues: 'These protestations by the St. Raphael's Societies [in the letter to Cardinal Rampolla] may not have been sincere, but a number of influential American bishops who were not members of the German-American group placed confidence in them. Corrigan, McQuaid, and others evidently thought that Ireland was using Cahenslyism as a red herring to divert attention from the obnoxious character of his school reforms....' (*Cath. Hist. Review*, vol. 32 p. 324).

“These complications belong to *another phase* of the fight against 'Cahenslyism' which had been mummified for propaganda purposes, and will be treated later. At this time, I merely wish to call attention to the smug manner of questioning the honesty of 'Cahenslyists' – almost in the very same sentence which scathingly refers to the 'mutual lack of confidence, plus an amazing absence of Christian charity,' in the bitter controversies of the Nineties.

“I fear that we have made little progress in the intervening decades, and that some of us are, if not as uncharitable, at least as superficial as many of the opponents of Cahensly in 1891-92. A case in point is Mr. Meng's stricture (I.e., p. 325) on the explanation (furnished by the 'Cahenslyists') 'of the offending paragraph of the Lucerne Memorial.'

In regard to the appointment of bishops to minister to the spiritual needs of the immigrants, 'Granting that it was entirely sincere,' he says, '...it was an administrative anachronism,' 'a division of spiritual jurisdiction' which 'would violate every rule of hierarchical organization' and 'could not help but create division within the American Church.' Therefore, 'the kindest judgment that could be passed upon those who supported this idea was that they were innocently naïve in matters of ecclesiastical administration. Ireland and his friends might be pardoned a certain amount of scepticism concerning the motives of their opponents, for it is hard to believe that such a degree of naivete could exist in the minds of responsible administrative officials.'

“All this has the ring of finality – but Mr. Meng apparently is unaware of the fact that what he condescendingly calls innocent naivete had received official sanction forty years before he wrote, namely, in 1907 when the appointment of Rev. Joseph M. Koudelka as the auxiliary bishop of Cleveland 'with jurisdiction over the growing foreign population, especially of the Slav races, in the diocese.' (*Cath. Enc.*, vol. IV, p. 57), created a precedent, which has not remained an isolated instance!

* * *

“The authors of the Lucerne Memorial – which more appropriately should have named after the Marchese Volpe-Landi who had submitted to the conference the original draft – had worked out for emigration and immigration an idealistic program which was bound to collide with hard realities. It contained some splendid suggestions which, upon dispassionate and unbiased examination, might have been advantageously adopted in a somewhat modified form, They were not unprecedented in the history of immigration and were applied or at least attempted (Catholic Colonization Society) in connection with later projects. I have in mind particularly the proposal in regard to the systematic settlement of immigrants according to nationalities. Father Pierz, Father Berghold and many other German and Slav pioneer priests and especially different religious orders – Redemptorists, Franciscans, the Society of the Precious Blood, etc. – achieved remarkable results by following that method, Thus, for instance, splendid parishes were built up in Stearns County, Carver County, Brown County, etc., in Minnesota. And, ten years after the Cahensly controversy, monks of St. John's Abbey in Collegeville undertook the establishment of St. Peter's Colony in Canada according to the pattern approved by experience. Neither in the United States nor in Canada were there any indications of the disruptive effects to the religious and political field anticipated by those who, steeped in prejudices, sternly opposed and unconditionally condemned the proposals of the Lucerne Memorial.

* * *

“It was the main weakness of the Lucerne program that the conference proposed an

over-organized structure comprising all phases of the complicated emigration and immigration problems. It provided protection for the emigrants even before their departure from home as well as on the way to their destination, and proposed to transplant them to environments similar to those they had left in Europe, While this plan was well enough in theory, it neglected to adjust itself to the situation prevailing in America where the Church was well organized, although deficiencies unavoidably connected with the rapid development of the Church, plus those emanating from human frailty, were in evidence.

“The fact that the Lucerne conference submitted the proposals to the Holy See was sufficient proof that a disrespectful attitude toward, or interference with, ecclesiastical authority had not been intended. The neglect of properly approaching the authorities in America may have been partly caused by the lack of cooperation on the part of American Catholics the St. Raphael's Society had experienced on former occasions. It may also have been prompted by another consideration. In the preceding decades the Austrian Leopoldinen-Stiftung, the Ludwig-Missionsverein of Munich, and other German mission societies had supported the American missions magnanimously. The Leopoldinen-Association had been founded in Vienna through the efforts of John Frederic Rese (who, a Hanoverian, had fought under Bluecher at the Battle of Waterloo), Vicar General of Cincinnati and appointed Bishop of of Detroit in 1833, the first German-born bishop in the United States. The association, named after the Archduchess Leopoldine, was liberally supported by the Hapsburgs. The Ludwig-Missionsverein existed since 1838. It was named after its greatest benefactor, King Ludwig (Louis) I of Bavaria (in whose honor, because of his munificent support of the American missions, particularly the aid given to Archabbot Boniface Wimmer, O.S.B., St. John's Abbey at Colledgeville originally was called St. Ludwig am See – St. Louis on the Lake. Among the friends of this association was Hofkaplan Mueller and the great Joseph Goerres and his illustrious circle.

“The deep interest of German and Austrian Catholics in the welfare of emigrants was, therefore, an old tradition which received new impetus by the reports of the dangers threatening the Church in America, and, conscious of the traditional close relations with the Church in America, the German and Austrian signers of the Lucerne Memorial hardly anticipated the bitter accusations of intrusive meddling.

“However that may be – there was justification in the reproach (to which the American St. Raphael's Society also subscribed) that plans dealing with vital American interests should not have been approached without consulting American ecclesiastical authorities. It is today an academic question whether more would have been achieved in case of such a consultation. The program in the course of such procedure probably would have reduced to more immediate necessities or – perhaps would have been ignored as former attempts of the St. Raphael's societies had been ignored, but, at all events, at least the

worst accusations would have been averted.

“Comments of friendly critics prove that the formulation of the Lucerne proposals actually invited misunderstandings – honest as well as willful misunderstandings. Thus, for instance, a commendable work of French and German origin, although condemning the 'undignified and entirely unjustified attacks' on the Memorial of the Lucerne conference raises the objection: '...Would not the approval of such wishes logically lead to the establishment of separate dioceses along national instead of territorial lines?' (Jannet and Kaempfe, *Die Vereinigten Staaten in der Gegenwart*, Freiburg, 1893, p.561). This French-German book, too, lost sight of the fact that the Lucerne proposals were dealing with transitory conditions and nowhere indicated the expectation or desire to create in America miniature Germanys, miniature Italys, etc. The fact is that the curriculum proposed for the schools in settlements of immigrants emphasized the necessity of the study of language and history of the country.

* * *

“The authors of the Lucerne Memorial committed another grave blunder of disastrous consequences when they appraised the number of Catholics who had lost their faith in the United States at 'more than ten million,' and in the supplementary Memorial even raised that figure to sixteen million. These figures – which were too high even when counting in, as Cahensly later did, all the descendants of the original apostates – were based on calculations which the Canadian Abbe Velleneuve had presented at the Third Social Congress at Liege in 1890. The Abbe's figures seemed to be borne out, in part at least, by statistics furnished several years prior by the Rev. Richard Frederic Clarke, S.J., of Great Britain. Fr. Clarke, a former Anglican preacher, after his conversion had joined the Society of Jesus. He made extensive studies on the losses of the Catholic Church in America, and in a series of articles published in the *Month*, of London, placed their number at more than five million. These figures were rejected in the United States as highly exaggerated, and when the Lucerne conference more than doubled them, some people were inclined to assume a planned insult of the Church and the bishops in America, suggestive of a serious neglect of duty on their part.

“Although this interpretation was emphatically disavowed by the signers of the Lucerne Memorial, American resentment found vehement expression. So, for instance, the Rev. Henry A. Brann, attacking 'Cahenslyism' in the *Catholic World* in January, 1892, unburdened himself of the following countercharges:

“We want no foreign bishops here, with the stamp of Kaiser Wilhelm or of Franz Joseph, or of the Carbonaro Crispi on their mitres. We take European immigrants and we improve their conditions, physically, mentally and morally. Heaven knows how many of them are poor specimens of European civilization and of European Christianity!...We

say to fault-finders from Austria, purify the corrupt capital of your half-infidel empire; you French Gascons, look to the beams in your own eyes; you Machiavellian intriguers at Rome, go preach the Gospel to the Camorra of Naples and to the Mafia of Sicily. We say to the Marchese Landi that until he and his countrymen free Leo XIII from the chains which they have allowed to be fastened around the feet of authority, they are in no position to criticize the Catholicity of other nations.'

“In November, 1892, Archbishop Corrigan of New York submitted to the archbishops meeting in his episcopal city a study, partly based on a series of articles written by John Gilmary Shea for the *Catholic News*, in which, in defense of the American episcopate, the assertions concerning the losses among immigrant Catholics were refuted. The statement, which was signed by the archbishops and forwarded to the Holy Father, emphasized the European origin of many of the causes for loss of faith by immigrants. (Meng, I.e. p. 333.)

“This statement was incontrovertible. There were among German immigrants '*Taujschein-Katholiken*,' Catholics in name only; there were among the French, many of the type we find depicted in *Yellow Tapers Over Paris*; and there were among other nationalities, all variations of Catholics whose only claim to Catholicism was their certificate of baptism. On the other hand, many who arrived in America as nominal Christians, although having been counted as Catholics in the old country, under the prevailing system of union of Church and State, became devout members of the Faith if they had the good fortune to settle in well-ordered parishes and to come under the influence of zealous priests with the proper understanding for the spiritual and religious needs of the new arrivals.

“Cahensly and his friends in later years fully recognized these complexes. One of Cahensly's most intimate co-workers, Heinrich Herkenrath, editor of the *St. Raphaels-Blatt*, dealt with them very soberly when he wrote in 1914: 'On the strenght of all the fluctuating investigations and studies it may be said today that the losses, presenting themselves in figures running into the millions, can by no means arbitrarily be charged to the New World. They belonged in large measure to branches of the tree of the Church which in Europe unfortunately had long since been dead or retained but little vitality...' *Festschrift*, St.-Leo-Haus, 1914, p. 21.)

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In part XXV of Joseph Matt's "A Centenary of Catholic Life in America," published in *The Wanderer* April 5, 1951, Matt explains how the liberal American bishops' propaganda campaign against "Cahenslyism," adeptly played in the newspapers, was a smokescreen to cover for their broader initiative of "Americanizing" non-English

speaking immigrant Catholics, and assimilating them into the American “mainstream.”

Due the length of this article, No. 25, it will appear in two segments.

* * *

“The nationality and language conflict,” Matt wrote, “among American Catholics reached a climax in the days of 'Cahenslyism,' that phenomenon which was named after Peter Paul Cahenslyt, founder and for many years secretary of the St. Raphael's Society for the Protection of Catholic Emigrants.

“The episode labeled 'Cahenslyism' originally was not connected with the struggle of German-American Catholics for equal rights of their parishes and the pastors of these parishes, and it had to do even less with the controversy about 'Americanism' which at that time was in its initial stages. Cahensly and his friends, in submitting to the Holy See certain proposals (discussed in former articles) regarding the welfare of of Catholic immigrants, in no shape or manner referred to preceding and current frictions within the Church in America. Their program was definitely confined to what, in their opinion, would be conducive to the religious and moral welfare of the many thousands of Catholics Europe poured on our shores year after year.

“There is nowhere the slightest proof of premeditated interference with American affairs outside of the immigration problem and it is fair to assume that Cahensly and the St. Raphael's Societies had no intention of synchronizing their proposals with controversies in America. That the wishes explained in the Lucerne Memorial soon became poart of those controversies was the work, not of the 'Cahenslyites,' but of the 'Americanists.' The Cahensly affair proper was of short duration and would soon have been out of the picture but for the effective propaganda which grotesquely exaggerated its importance and kept it alive artificially. It originated with the first biased reports on the Lucerne Memorial in the Spring of 1891 and logically should have terminated with its formal rejection the following year.

“The high spots of the short history of what may be summed up under 'Cahenslyism' – that is, the propaganda bearing Peter Paul Cahensly's name, rightly or wrongly – were the following: 1. Submission of the Memorial on April 16, 1891; 2. Cardinal Rampolla's letter of June 28, 1891, informing Cardinal Gibbons of the rejection of the Lucerne proposals; 3. The letter of explanation and protest (against unfair American accusations) sent to Cardinal Rampolla by the European St. Raphael's Societies in April 1892; 4. Cardinal Rampolla's reply of April 23, 1892, to Prince Isenburg-Berstein, President of the German St. Raphael's Society, expressing full confidence in the good faith of the signers of the Memorial; 5. Cardinal Ledochowski's letter, of May 15, 1892, to Cardinal Gibbons which – by explicit references to the procedure prescribed for the election of

bishops by the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore – reaffirmed the rejection of the Lucerne proposals but at the same time very pronouncedly warned against scandalous machinations in connection with episcopal appointments.

“The Prefect of the Propaganda wrote in this regard: 'You are certainly well aware that on the occasion of vacancies in episcopal sees in the United States divers commotions very often arise among both clergy and people, which....are growing more serious and frequent as time goes on. The effects which usually result in such cases are neither trivial nor hidden, nor are they of such a nature that this Sacred Congregation can pass them over in silence. For we have now and again seen clergy and people active beyond their legitimate rights in the nominations of candidates for the episcopal office: contentions are diffused and are fomented through the press. But what particularly fosters these contentions is the violent zeal with which each factions endeavors to secure bishops of its own nationality, as if private utility and not the Church's interests were the end to be looked to in the selection of a suitable pastor....It is desirable, therefore, that in every diocese both clergy and people be warned of the deplorable results which come from contests of this kind; that they not only rend asunder the bond of harmony which should exist among souls, and relax the vigor of ecclesiastical discipline, but become a stumbling-block and scandal to non-Catholics as well....' (Allen S. Will, *Life of Cardinal Gibbons*, p. 248).

“Cardinal Ledochowski's letter surely does not justify its usual interpretation as an outright condemnation of 'Cahenslyism.' It was particularly the German Catholic press which had for a long time complained bitterly of the practices so sternly censured by the Prefect of the Propaganda; it had even coined a name for them: '*Bischofsmacherei*' – wire-pulling for episcopal candidates. Mr. Meng, apparently nonplussed by some phases of the Cahensly quarrel which cannot be reconciled with the one-sided and injudicious arguments against the Lucerne 'conspiracy,' says of the years preceding Cardinal Ledochowski's stricture: 'Reading between the lines of much of the correspondence of the American bishops during this period [end of the Eighties] and the years following, it is evident that one of the divisive factors in the situation was competition for episcopal honors' (*Cath. Hist. Rev.*, vol. 32, p. 307 seq.).

* * *

“It was for these and other extraneous reasons that the controversy on 'Cahenslyism,' instead of being confined to the time between its origin in the Spring of 1891 and the final Roman pronouncement on the Lucerne Memorial on May 15, 1892, was made to appear as the moving force behind the closely interlinked conflicts besetting the Church in America from the earliest to the last manifestations of 'Americanism.' A scandalous propaganda which forever will be a blot on the remarkable history of the Catholic Church in our country made of the Lucerne conference – which, in spite of the mistakes

discussed in last week's article of this series, will be appraised by unbiased historians as a well-meant work of genuine Christian charity – a 'plot,' a 'conspiracy' of sinister nationalistic tendencies.

“The campaign of distortion and abuse set in motion in April and May of 1891, increased in volume and violence like an avalanche, from week to week. Within a short time after the news agencies had circulated the first reports on the Lucerne Memorial, a dishonest propaganda had succeeded in convincing American Catholic public opinion that Peter Paul Cahensly and the leaders of the European St. Raphael's Society (in fact, of the German St. Raphael's Society – for others were seldom mentioned) were tools of an un-American, if not anti-American, clique of arrogant and ambitious self-seekers ruthlessly undermining peace and harmony among American Catholics. The scope of the plot soon widened and assumed international implications. This man Cahensly was a rare find of great value for the exponents of the new era of Catholicism through in America! In him they had discovered the real demon responsible for all unpleasant interferences with the innovations clamoring with increasing insistence for recognition since Archbishop John Ireland had become a towering influence in the field of American Catholic thought.

“Cahensly, as has been pointed out in former chapters of this series, had nothing to do with the controversies which had engaged American Catholics since the beginning of the Eighties, and even his name was practically unknown on this side of the Atlantic. Now, however, the antithesis. 'Cahenslyism' – 'Americanism,' was constructed. 'Cahenslyism' means backwardness, hyper-conservatism, foreignism devoid of understanding of the American spirit, 'ultramontanism' (which, according to *Webster's New International Dictionary*, tends to minimize national aspirations and to stress Papal supremacy). 'Americanism,' on the other hand, stood for progress, close adjustment to the American genius, broadmindedness toward the spirit of the time, reconciliation between the Church and modern Society.

“This rubrication has remained quite stationary in treatises on the controversies of the Eighties and Nineties, and this arbitrary construction and grouping of historic facts continues to hamper an objective presentation of the conflicts of those crowded decades and their influence on Catholic thought, and obscures the picture of the effects on the present era. It is precisely for these reasons that the author of these articles again and again stresses the necessity of distinguishing between the different phases of the conflicts of the past and repeatedly, even at the risk of incurring reproaches for repetitiousness, reverts to particularly important stages.

“The conflicts before 1891-92 (St. Louis Memorial of 1884, Milwaukee Memorial of 1886, the fight against the German-American Priests' Society and the German-American Catholic congresses, etc.) had nothing to do with Cahensly and 'Cahenslyism.' The

conflicts revolving around 'Americanism' included, besides the nationality and language controversies, the school question, the Faribault Plan, the Catholic attitude toward secret societies, the Chicago Parliament of Religions, quarrels at the struggling Catholic University (resignations of Dr. Pohle and Dr. Peries, dismissal of Dr. Schroeder, etc.) the international ramifications of the controversy, and the final condemnation of 'Americanism' by Leo XIII in January 1899.

“That conflict was of far-reaching importance for Catholic intellectual and religious life of our age. To present it as a concomitant or effect of 'Cahenslyism' is an uncritical understatement ignoring its significance for America as an integral part – in the opinion of some writers, as one of the original sources of Modernism, those philosopho-theological errors rampant at the turn of the century and condemned in 1907 by Pope Pius X in the encyclical letter *Pascendi*.

“'Americanism' was a movement deeply affecting Catholic intellectual life in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. One of its earliest manifestations, the nationality and language controversy, comprised two distinct phases: the first, roughly speaking, between 1880 and 1890; the second, the fight against 'Cahenslyism', from Spring 1891 to the latter part of 1892. Thereafter the defense of the German-American Catholics against unfair accusations issuing from the anti-Cahensly campaign was closely interlinked with the disputes on 'Americanism.' The fact that men of prominence in the nationality and language controversies played a role also in the fight against 'Americanism' was not due – as 'Americanists' charged – to un-American and anti-American sentiments; their opposition sprang from their sound conservative philosophy which, together with their historical sense, enabled them to recognize in the innovations of 'Americanism' a kinship with Gallicanism and similar movements toward a national Church.

“'Cahenslyism,' therefore, must be eliminated as a motivating factor in the struggle with 'Americanism.' Its subordinate role in this important period of intellectual and religious development on the American scene is best illustrated by the fact that Archbishop Corrigan of New York, Bishop McQuaid of Rochester and other outstanding leaders, who had rejected the Lucerne proposals and, accordingly, cannot be lined up with the 'Cahenslyists', opposed 'Americanism' with might and main – to the great embarrassment of historians striving to reconcile historical facts with old slogans.

* * *

“It is, therefore, high time to discard the threadbare myth that 'Cahenslyism' was the motive power in the fight against innocently persecuted 'Americanism.' The truth is, as has been pointed out in these articles before, that 'Americanism' supported not only by allied Catholic organs but particularly by secularist and infidel daily newspapers, hid

behind the smokescreen of 'Cahenslyism' and camouflaged its aims with the pretense of defending the Church and the American Republic against foreign plots fostered by European Governments.

“It is difficult to find in modern history a parallel to this systematic denunciation and abuse of fellow Catholics. This campaign of vilification, however, was even outdone by a scheme of catastrophic significance. I, for one, always felt that that episode in the history of 'Americanism' usually treated by historians and apologists as a delicate touch-me-not, namely, the mobilization of governmental forces, through the notorious Senate speech of Cushman K. Davis of St. Paul and diplomatic conversations, was the most serious disservice to Catholic interests in the record of 'Americanism.' According to confidential notes, it was chiefly Monsignor Denis O'Connell, rector of the American College in Rome, who suggested to bring pressure on 'Rome', via the Government! (That dark chapter will be discussed later.)

“John J. Meng has shed some light on these backgrounds of the critical period of American Church history, That is one of the redeeming features of his studies in the *Catholic Historical Review* to which I have taken some exception for various reasons. Although he presents a somewhat confused picture of 'Cahenslyism' (because he followed old patterns too closely), he at least made a serious attempt to unravel the mass of misconceptions and misconstructions by digging into the archives and collecting much valuable material. He this, willy-nilly, blasted some cherished myths of chiaroscuro romanticists writing on 'Cahenslyism' and 'Americanism' and brought to light personal animosities, ambitions and other human frailties which contributed to the bitterness of the disputes.

“It is hardly edifying to read that Bishop John Foley of Detroit spoke in a letter of June 2nd, 1891, to Cardinal Gibbons of 'the wicked wretch, Cahensly, who is striving to undo the work of the Church in our country.' Other prelates stooped to similar abuse. Archbishop Gross of Oregon, in a letter of June 28th of the same year, besought Cardinal Gibbons 'to devise some means to destroy utterly the horrible move initiated by Herr Cahensly and the Lucerne Conference....That disgusting and diabolical nationalism hatched in Milwaukee has already done grievous mischief. Cardinal Gibbons himself gave vent to his feelings when, on June 3rd, 1891, he wrote to Archbishop Elder of Cincinnati (who, although on record as being opposed to the tenor of the different Memorials, repeatedly emphasized the duty of according justice to the Germans): 'I regard your meeting [to nominate a successor to Bishop Gilmour of Cleveland] as exceedingly important, as being the first that will take place, since the revelation of the Americo-European conspiracy, which has inflicted so deep an insult on the episcopate and the Catholics of the United States and seems to regard the sees of America as fit to be filled by the first greedy ecclesiastical adventurer that comes to our country.'”

Next week, we will resume with Part XXV.

* * *

Several weeks ago, we mentioned the great German-American Catholic journalist Arthur Preuss, editor of *The Review*, published, in English, in St. Louis. Recently FTM was browsing through some editions from 1901, and found the following “news brief,” a letter to the editor of *Der Wanderer*, under the heading, “The Chief Obstacle.”

“The chief obstacle in the way of a Catholic daily, as well as of Catholic society federation, is in the opinion of Rev. Dean Hackner (*Der Wanderer*, 'No. 29), that the English-speaking Catholics of the country are infected with 'Americanism.' which exercises its nefarious influence not so much in working evil as in preventing good, it being the tendency of this error to put forward the natural and purely human at the expense of the supernatural and specifically Catholic. 'Americanism' will have to be rooted out before a Catholic federation can be accomplished and Catholic dailies can prosper.

“This view is confirmed by the notorious fact that it is precisely the 'liberalistic' Catholic organs which, if not hostile, are apathetic in these important matters.”

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Continuing with part XXV of Joseph Matt's “Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota, published in the April 5, 1951 edition of *The Wanderer*. Readers will recall that Matt was asserting that the Americanist bishops' attack on Peter Paul Cahensly and “Cahenslyism” was a smokescreen to divert attention from the nascent Modernism incubating in the “Americanism” eventually condemned by Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical.

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“According to Meng, (L.c. Vol. 32, p. 313, *Catholic Historical Review*), 'Archbishop Ireland believed that opposition to the kind of educational development he advocated was closely linked to the purposes of the “Cahensly conspiracy.” He was convinced that the Germans found all attempts to modify or eliminate the parochial schools because they wished to use these schools for the perpetuation of the German language, German customs, and Germany loyalty.'

“These accusations were directed chiefly at Archbishop Katzer of Milwaukee. The Rev. John Conway, editor of the (long since defunct) *Northwestern Chronicle* of St. Paul, writing in the *Review of Reviews* (august 1892), enlarged upon the theme in an article purporting to give the true history of the Lucerne 'conspiracy.' 'A political move,' he

wrote, 'is covered under the name of religion.' He specifically named archbishops, bishops, priests and laymen who instigated the 'plot.' Archbishop Katzer, 'Cahensly's protege,' headed the list. The Rev. Conway concluded that the 'conspiracy' was deepening at home and abroad, and that it was necessary for all Americans of all creeds to unite to prevent foreign attempts to control the United States.

“Archbishop Katzer, in a letter to Cardinal Gibbons dated August 3rd, 1892, labeled Conway's article 'a most malicious and most slanderous reproduction of all the false accusations which had appeared before.' 'Your Eminence,' he wrote, 'will undoubtedly recollect what has transpired at our meeting in St. Louis [in November, 1891], at which, in the presence of all the archbishops, I repudiated any and every knowledge of a connection with the Lucerne conference and its subsequent petition to the Propaganda and the Holy Father. I may add that the very name of Cahensly was unknown to me, so so that when I read his name first in the American papers, I did not know whether he was Swiss or German or Slav....I am an Austrian by birth, Cahensly is a member of the German Reichstag [This was a mistake; Cahensly at the time was a member of the Prussian Diet and was not elected to the national Parliament until 1898 – Ed.] and Baron Schloetzer [Schloezer, Ed.] was Prussian Ambassador. Whether they have expressed themselves concerning me or not, I cannot and do not know. But suppose they have, is this to be laid at my door, will this justify an ecclesiastic to make accusation “of even conspiring with foreign powers,” and this against an Archbishop?...To my knowledge I have given not even a shadow of ground which would justify those false and most hateful assertions. If I hold different opinions on the school question and in regard to societies, is that a reason to belie me in manner which is almost diabolical?’

“In his reply the Cardinal said that he accepted fully, and always had accepted, Archbishop Katzer's disavowal of any connection with the Lucerne conference.

* * *

“Archbishop Katzer's protest takes us into a labyrinth the exponents of 'Americanism' had built around 'Cahenslyism.' The very title of Conway's defamatory article, 'Cahenslyism Versus Americanism,' epitomizes the thesis peddled by unfair propagandists to this day.

“The very first press reports on Cahensly's audience at the Vatican on April 16th, 1891, had imputed the Lucerne Memorial political aims. A cable to the New York *Herald*, allegedly released at Berlin, says Cahensly in *Der St.-Raphaels-Verein*, etc., p. 41), 'contained in its introductory remarks a number of untruths and insinuations, – for instance, that the Prussian representative Baron Schloezer had told me in Rome that he regarded the appointment of Archbishop Katzer as of equal importance for Protestants as well as Catholics and as favorable to German interests; that I had appealed to foreign

Governments for support of the proposals of the European St. Raphael's societies, and that the German and Austrian representatives at the Vatican had received instructions from their Governments to use the petitions and proposals; furthermore, that I had arrived in Rome equipped with letters of Dr. Windthorst [the leader of the Center Party who had died on March 14th 1891, Ed.] and high Church dignitaries. All this is a concoction of untruths....'

“Thus Cahensly wrote in a historic retrospect in 1900, reiterating statements he had consistently made, orally and in writing, throughout the bitter controversy. But the exponents and propagandists of 'Americanism' just as consistently ignored every correction. Msgr. Denis O'Connell and Catholic publications continued to peddle the lies invented by the anonymous informers of the New York *Herald* and other secular dailies. Pamphleteers embellished them with fantastic arabesques. Thus, to cite one example, the Rev. George Zuercher wrote in his notorious pamphlet: 'During Archbishop Ireland's stay in Rome the following winter [1892], the official organs of the Governments in the Triple Alliance – Prussia [!], Austria and Italy – belittled the archbishop. They were afraid he would again instill American and anti-monarchical ideas into the Pope's mind. (*Foreign Ideas in the Catholic Church in America*, p. 27).

* * *

“Allen S. Will's *Life of Cardinal Gibbons*, a pretentious volume of more than 400 pages (John Murphy Co., Baltimore and New York, 1911), contains a collection of ridiculous assertions regarding 'Cahenslyism.' In the Preface, the author assures his readers: 'In the preparation of this book, I have been especially solicitous to obtain accuracy. Unverified statements have been rejected...' While I do not question Mr. Will's honest intentions, I cannot concede that he achieved the accuracy he endeavored to obtain.

“The fifteenth chapter of his book, entitled, 'Americanism: The Cahensly Question,' is full of errors and silly declamations. The author correctly states in the introductory sentences of the chapter: 'Simultaneous in its development with the school controversy was the question of “Americanism,” which embraced within itself, to a greater or lesser degree, all the other problems of the Church in America in the last two decades of the nineteenth century.' “Americanism,” he continues, 'involved the nationalization of the foreign elements which were crowding into the population of the country' and, indirectly, the question whether the development of 'progressive thought' should proceed in the Church of the United States, or whether the Church 'become responsive to the reactionary influences developing in Europe.' Cardinal Gibbons 'deeply realized that the most effective argument, however absurd, which had been used against the Church in periods of religious intolerance... had been that she possessed, in some measure, a foreign tinge. He had thrown the whole fervor of his being into a battle of years to dissipate this view. His success had been amazing; and it would have crushed him, had

the results been snatched away at the last moment.'

“And this precisely was what almost happened. Says Mr. Will: 'The widespread agitation about “Americanism,” which began in the late Eighties, was attributed in part to Herr Peter Cahensly, secretary of the Archangel Raphael Society for the Protection of German Emigrants, and was often referred to as “Cahenslyism.” This society had been formed for the laudable purpose of promoting the spiritual welfare of settlers in foreign countries. It had done a notable work, when its aims suddenly widened so as to include within its scope the language of those who emigrated from Europe. It had caught a breath from the gust of militant Pan-Germanism, which, starting on the banks of the Elbe and the Weser, swept through the Teutonic realms and the diverse peoples embraced within the Austrian empire, spread into Russia, thence to the United States, Brazil, Argentina, and wherever a German might go from his native town or farm to begin life anew.'

““Pan-Germanism,” Mr. Will continues in his flamboyant style, 'was a vivid dream, springing from natural causes that took their root in the unification of the Empire of Bismarck and its closer welding by Wilhelm II. From the time of the Napoleonic wars, when the German principalities, divided against themselves, lay crushed and humbled at the feet of the conqueror, the natural spirit of Germania had slept until awakened by the magic touch of the man of blood and iron. Now rising from its slumber, it shook itself like a lion, and, half uncertain of its real destiny, wrestled with its own fierce energy. Pan-Germanism had its prototype in the Pan-Hellenism of the ancient world' (L.c. p. 237). Its purpose was to build the German emigrants to foreign lands into a formidable reserve so that 'some day there might be a greater Germany which, like a Colossus, would bestride the world. German influence might predominate throughout the hemispheres.' And 'Cahenslyism,' under the protection of St. Raphael and the leadership of Peter Paul Cahensly, was part of this grandiose scheme – apparently intent on making docile tools of the 'Italians, French, Poles, and others involved in it to some extent.'

“No wonder that Mr. Will, after having thus described the workings of 'Cahenslyism' and, with the same enlightened and enlightening lucidity, the glorious and victorious battles waged against it by 'Americanism,' comes to the conclusion: 'Cahenslyism was, perhaps, the most serious danger which has ever threatened the progress of the Catholic Church in this country...a propaganda perhaps more ominous to the future of the nation that was the anti-slavery agitation in its beginnings....'

“A comment on these hallucinations is superfluous.”

Thus ends Article XXV.

* * *

An article from Arthur Preuss' *The Review*, published in St. Louis in the late 1800s and early 1900s, April 18, 1901 issue, helps illuminate some of the controversies Joseph Matt was recalling in his "Centenary."

The following is a letter to the editor, headlined, "Bishop Meerschaert and the German Catholics of Oklahoma":

"To The Editor of The Review. Sir:

"In view of the discussion of Bishop [Theophile] Meerschaert's policy in dealing with the Catholic Germans in Oklahoma, a glance at a neighboring diocese across the Red River may be of interest.

"The Diocese of Dallas with its immense territory – all of Northern Texas – is sparsely settled and its Catholic population is small. It still has missionaries in charge of ten or more very large counties. Within the last ten or twelve years a number of German Catholic settlements have been located in the Northern part of the Diocese and are now more or less prosperous financially; spiritually they are all flourishing. These settlers have never complained of the treatment they received at the hands of their Bishop, since they all have priests who preach to them and hear their confessions in German. How did Bishop [Edward Joseph] Dunne succeed in getting German-speaking priests for them?

"Dallas is a poor diocese and can no more afford to pay large sums for the schooling of priests than the Vicariate of the Indian Territory [i.e. Bishop Meerschaert]. But where there is a will there is a way; the Bishop prevailed on the monks of Subiaco to take charge of these missions and they have been doing good work among these people ever since. If the insufficient precipitation in Northern Texas were not such a drawback to agriculture, the Diocese of Dallas would to-day have ten times as many German Catholics as it actually has.

"Oklahoma also ought to have received a very large influx of German Catholics since it was opened to settlers. In Illinois, Iowa, and other Northern States, where land is high in price and scarce, there is a numerous class of farmers, especially Germans, who are looking about for cheaper land, and an opportunity to provide a small farm for each of their children as they get married. Now it seems to us, from whose congregations these people emigrate, that it would have been a wise policy on the part of the ecclesiastical authorities in Oklahoma to encourage the immigration of this religious and thrifty class of people in every possible way, since it is plain that such an opportunity for building up the Vicariate will never come again.

"We very much regret that a general distrust prevails among the farmers in question

and their pastors against the ecclesiastical authorities in the Territory. For years, many by no means hot-headed editors of German Catholic papers have considered it their duty to warn their readers not to move to Oklahoma, and this sentiment of the German press must have been known to those concerned in the Vicariate. Though bishops are not expected to explain their doings and their policy in the newspapers, still it would seem a matter of common prudence that some one in the confidence of the Bishop should correct the sentiment, if erroneous, by a simple statement of the facts. As it is, no one will expect that either Father Meifuss' pleading or the Bishop's letter to *The Review* will clear away that distrust. It will be said the latter is not to the point and does not cover the principal subject of complaint, since it ignores the very explicit and reiterated charge that the Bishop forbade his priests to preach in German. The Bishop's talk about the many good German Catholics and the few bad leaders in the Vicariate will not carry much weight either. The common people suffer and grumble in private, being too timid or too clumsy to carry their complaints before the public. If there were no leaders, we would all, politically and civilly, at least, be slaves. In fact, it would not hurt either bishops or priests to meditate once in a while on the old saying, that a kicking mule is better than a dead mule.

“But whether there is good cause for the discontent of the German Catholics of Oklahoma or not, the deplorable fact remains that it will keep many Catholics from moving to the Territory and there providing homes for their children amid healthy moral surroundings, instead of letting them drift away to the big cities.

“We are not of those who believe that many of these people in Oklahoma will leave the Church, because they never hear a German sermon. As long as they can receive the sacraments and the priest is kind to them, they will keep the faith; but whether they will be zealous Catholics and reliable when sacrifices are to be made for congregational or diocesan purposes, is rather doubtful. The only good horse after all is the willing horse.

[Signed]

“(Rev.) A. J. Pennartz”.

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In Part XXVI of a “Centenary of Catholic Life in America,” published April 12, 1951, *The Wanderer's* editor, Joseph Matt documented how Archbishop John Ireland of St. Paul exploited long-standing nativist fears of foreign intervention in American politics – especially that of “Rome” – to promote “Americanism” in the U.S. Church through his proxies in the press and in politics.

In particular, Matt focused on an April 22, 1892 speech delivered in the U.S. Senate by Minnesota Republican Cushman Kellogg Davis of St. Paul attacking Peter Paul

Cahensly – perhaps with the connivance of his fellow Republican, Archbishop Ireland – accusing him of attempting to “denationalize American institutions.” Due to the length of this article, with the subhead, “Senator Davis' Infamous Speech,” it will be published in sections over two weeks.

* * *

“The presentation of the Cahensly quarrel,” wrote Matt, “has assumed much larger proportions, in volume and detail, than it had been the author's original intention. It was deemed necessary, however, to give an extensive account, because this turbulent phase in the history of 'Americanism' reveals the trends dominating that era to a surprising degree. A particular species of Liberalism had injected itself into Catholic thought and endeavor and began to spread its destructive blight.

“The nineteenth century was an era of evolution, revolution and confusion; of uncertainty and impatient groping; of continued clashes between Rationalism, Romanticism, Materialism and Idealism; of Reaction and Democracy; of the Christian Renaissance and Secularism and Skepticism. In the field of politics and economics it was an era of vast changes, – Napoleon's empire, rising from the apocalyptic orgies of the Great Revolution, was succeeded by world-wide British Imperialism; Germany's ascendancy to the role of the leading Continental Power; the entry of the United States into world politics; the rise of the Oriental Power, Japan, after Russia's devastating defeat. No less decisive were the changes in the economic and social field, – from handcraft profession and trade to the factory and industrialization, with the concomitant mechanization of human activity; from the village and city to the gigantic '*Wasserkopf der Kultur*' – the 'hydrocephalus (waterhead) of culture' as a critic drastically described the modern big city –, a change which deprived agriculture of its natural pre-eminence and in the over-populated industrial areas intensified and complicated social conflicts. Never before in history had developments of similar magnitude and impact revolutionized the entire structure of society within a like space of time.

“The Church stood in the midst of this upheaval like a rock in the surging seas. For her, too, the century was an era of storm and strife, of endless conflicts with the modern State striving for omnipotence (totalitarianism is the latest version). Some of the stations on the road to freedom were: 'the Cologne event' (the arrest, in 1837, of Archbishop Droste zu Vischering of Cologne, who opposed the encroachments of the Prussian Government on the rights of the Church and whose incarceration – in large measure due to the celebrated book, *Athanasius*, of the great Joseph Goerres – roused the Catholics of Germany and inaugurated that glorious epoch of German Catholicism unparalleled in any other country); the flight of Pope Pius IX to Gaeta in 1848; Kulturkampf – open persecution of the Church – in Germany and other countries; the spoliation of the Papal States by the Piedmontese with the support of Freemasonry and the treacherous French

Emperor Napoleon III, etc.

“But, hampered and persecuted, the Papacy irresistibly increased its authority and influence. The Hierarchy was reestablished in England (1850) and Holland (1853). The dogma of the Immaculate Conception was proclaimed in 1854. Ten years later, Pius IX in the Encyclical *Quanta cura*, accompanied by the famous Syllabus, condemned 'the chief errors of our times,' bearing on Pantheism, Naturalism, Rationalism, Indifferentism, Socialism, Communism, Freemasonry, and the various kinds of Liberalism which had begun to insinuate its subtle poison into the very marrow of Catholicism. In 1870, the Vatican Council proclaimed the dogma of Papal Infallibility. In the midst of the groping world of the nineteenth century, the Church was a dependable guide, unhesitating and forceful in the rejection of errors, whether they manifested themselves as Gallicanism, German Catholicism and Old Catholicism, Liberalism, Marxism, Modernism, etc., and just as firm and determined in the endeavor to restore the social order and the amity among nations.

* * *

“The Church in America, struggling for its existence under conditions entirely different from those in the Old World, was affected only directly by the changes and disturbances and the ideological quarrels going on in Europe. Intolerant attacks on the Church from time to time re-echoed the din of European disagreements and conflicts, meager news of which reached America after weeks and months. The resources of the Church together with whatever support was granted by European Catholics were completely absorbed by the problems arising after the rough foundations for future developments had been laid. In the years when her priests traveled lonesome roads through forests and prairies to shepherd the faithful scattered through still uncharted territories, the Church could ill-afford to bother about the hustle and bustle of the seething world over there. She was satisfied patiently and humbly to build the City of God in the New World out of the building material, partly rough and unhewn and unsquared, which Providence had sent here from all countries of the globe.

“But the Church is not a petrified structure tied to time and place; it is a living organism which develops and grows and extends the scope of its activities. The Church, therefore, in the midst of continued growth and changes could not stand still like Lot's wife. The political, economic and social conditions of the country in the Eighties and Nineties were entirely different from those in the days before the Civil War and 'The Winning of the West.' A new day had arrived and it was but natural that Catholic leaders, accepting the challenge of the times, claimed for the Church, which had become a power in the land, a full share in the shaping of the country's destiny.

“That was the task the spokesmen of 'Americanism' had set for themselves. Relegating

the principles of prudent conservatism together with the views of pusillanimous retrogressivists into the category of unrealistic and unsound reaction, they succeeded in a measure. Men with the qualifications and influence of Archbishop Ireland were able to get a hearing in the forum of public opinion and to silence or at least mitigate some of the old prejudices against 'Rome.' At the same time, however, they brought discord into the Catholic camp itself when their attempts to accelerate 'Americanization' of the immigrants seriously disturbed natural developments. The nationality and language conflict, climaxed by the Cahensly scandal, controverted pleas and demands which were at all times upheld by the Church in principle and, after the storm had subsided, were reaffirmed in practice in many instances. Looking backward, today, we are justified to see that the conflict was, to say the least, a useless waste of strength.

“But it was only one of the many phases in the struggle for recognition of Christianity and the Church by secularist modernist society. Many traits of these efforts to bring about a reconciliation of Secularism and the Church unmistakably reflect influences emanating from similar endeavors in France from Bossuet in the seventeenth, to the unfortunate Abbe Lammenais and brilliant Abbe Lacordaire in the nineteenth century. This holds particularly true in regard to the claim of national independence in ecclesiastical administration to be achieved if necessary with the aid of the ruling powers of the State.

“The great Bishop Jacques Benigne Bossuet, 'the Eagle of Meaux,' despite personal piety, supported the anti-Papal policy of King Louis XIV in the regale conflict. At the clergy assembly, in March 1682, convoked by the absolutist monarch, he drafted the four Gallican Articles, and, in spite of the protest of the Popes, he defended the nationalist doctrine embodied in them. The 'Americanists,' while not proposing a similar program conceding important prerogatives to the State (although making far-reaching concessions, for instance in the field of education), were willing to accept the aid of the Government to strengthen their position in the Church. Meng probably makes an overstatement when he describes the situation at the time of the arrival of the first Papal Delegate Archbishop Francesco Satolli, in these words: 'The American Hierarchy was not in a mood to receive advice on domestic questions from a foreigner, even though he might have behind him all the prestige of the Pope of Rome' (*Cath. Hist. Rev.* Vol. 32 p. 331). However that may be, – the sad fact remains that 'Americanism,' resolutely pursuing its aims, tried to bring political pressure to bear on 'Rome.'

* * *

“Msgr. Denis O'Connell, at that time rector of the American College in Rome, seems to have been one of the principal instigators of that deplorable venture. After an audience with Cardinal Rampolla, in August 1891, regarding the Lucerne Memorial, which apparently was too inconclusive to satisfy the Monsignor, he wrote to Cardinal Gibbons:

'The more I see of it, the more convinced I am that this question which is a purely spiritual one for us is a political one for them and that it forms part of their policy in dealing with the Central Powers. Nothing will ever restrain them in America, but the voice of the civil power.' By "them," O'Connell apparently meant the Papal Secretary of State, Rampolla, and Cardinal Persico, Secretary of the Congregation of the Propaganda.' In the same letter, he urged Cardinal Gibbons: "Let the question go before Congress" (Meng; pp 311 and 322).

"The same advice was given, at least indirectly, by the Rev. John P. Farrelly, later Bishop of Cleveland, who on August 14, 1891, wrote to Cardinal Gibbons from Grottaferrata: 'It appears from the eagerness to please C's [Cahensly's] powerful abettors was such that his plan was never regarded with disfavor. A Government makes a good backer' (Ib., p. 311).

"There is many a similar allusion in contemporary correspondences preserved in the archives. It is, therefore, unlikely that United States Senator Cushman Kellogg Davis of St. Paul, a Republican as Archbishop Ireland was, acted on his own initiative when he dragged the Cahensly affair into the debate on the Senate floor. It was on April 22, 1892, at the time when Archbishop Ireland was in Rome to defend his school plan. 'This action on the part of a Senator from Ireland's home state, taken at the very moment when the Congregation of the Propaganda was supposedly still considering whether to approve or disapprove Ireland's school plan, seems suspiciously well-timed' (Meng, p. 322). The archbishop, in press interviews and in Catholic publications friendly to his ideas, had repeatedly complained that opposition to him and his plans found political support in Germany, Austria and Italy. 'The evidence at hand does not show conclusively whether Ireland used the fear of foreign intervention as a means of securing acceptance of his ideas on "Americanization" of the Church, or whether he was sincerely convinced of the foreign threat to American institutions' (Meng, p. 323). Archbishop Corrigan, Bishop McQuaid, and others, 'evidently thought that Ireland was using "Cahenslyism" as a red herring to divert attention from the obnoxious character of the school reforms' (Ib., p. 324)."

Next week, the conclusion of Part XXVI.

* * *

Here are a few random items from Arthur Preuss' *The Review*, from the summer of 1901, which might leave you scratching your head:

May 17, 1901: "Editor Eltzholtz, of *Der Christelige Talsniand*, Chicago, claims that Sidney Rigdon, a backsliding preacher, who joined Joseph Smith in the summer of 1827, and who is the real author of the famous 'Book of Mormon,' probably proposed this shocking name as a joke on the illiterate Smith. A literal translation of the Greek word

Moroni is: a female demon, a scarecrow, a phantom, an illusion. The 'Book of Mormon' must therefore be translated. The Book of a Female Demon. The reader will please translate Mormonism.”

May 31, 1901: “Bishop [Bernard] McQuaid, of Rochester, delivered a strong sermon the other day, on the occasion of the solemn De La Salle triduum in the Buffalo Cathedral. His chief theme was education. There is danger, he said, that the children of the future will not receive the instruction in religious principles to which they have a God-given right.

“The Catholics are deprived of their share in the school moneys, but they do not protest ; they bow their heads in humble submission ; and until they learn their rights, it will be better if they submit. They ought to fight for their rights at the polls. It would be a happy day if the women would be given the suffrage, because they will vote as Christian men would vote if they had the courage. Till then they should pray to the end that some day we may defy our enemies who would drive God out of the schools.”

* * *

June 6, 1901: “The Catholic population of the Diocese of St. Augustine, which comprises nearly the whole State of Florida, once entirely Catholic, is given in this year's Catholic Directory as 7,000. Last year the record was 18,000. The decrease was explained by Father Maher of the Cathedral to a *Standard and Times'* correspondent (May 18th). He says Bishop Moore dropped 11,000- Cubans from the count because they are Catholics in name only.

“But why have these people ceased to practice their religion?”

* * *

June 20: “For many years Father Boyle was one of the most prominent and popular Catholic clergymen in Washington, where he had a great reputation as a wit. Many of his most intimate friends were Protestants and members of the Protestant clergy. A few months before his death he erected a missionary chapel down by the Navy Yard and bought at a junk shop an old bell which had been discarded by one of the Presbyterian churches.

“He sent the bell to a foundry in Georgetown and had several inches of metal pared off the rim. Having thus got rid of a crack, the harsh and discordant tones of the bell became short and sweet. Meeting a Presbyterian parson not long after. Father Boyle called his attention to the change and the latter could scarcely believe it was the same bell. 'What in the world did you do with that bell,' enquired the Presbyterian pastor, 'to cause such a change in the tone?' 'We blessed it and blessed it until we got the Presbyterian devil out

of it,' retorted Father Boyle, 'and then it sounded all right.' – *Chicago Chronicle*, May 26th, 1901.

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Continuing with Part XXVI of Joseph Matt's "A Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota," published April 12, 1951, which focused on Minnesota Republican Senator Cushman Davis' "Infamous Speech" on the floor of the U.S. Senate attacking Peter Paul Cahensly.

Matt wrote:

"Cushman K. Davis, who in spite of his reputation as a "statesman" knew of European affairs as he did the quadrature of a circle, and was an ignoramus in matters Catholic, had very vague ideas concerning Cahensly and the Lucerne Memorial. He abundantly proved that in his performance in the Senate. Speaking on the issue on the calendar, the Chinese immigration bill (H.R. 6185), he declared:

"The attempt of Herr Cahensly to denationalize American institutions, and plant in our midst as many nations as there are foreign tongues, is more matter for profound concern than the Chinese questions which have arisen since 1858....Confucius rises infinitely above Cahensly.' To back up this insult, Senator Davis had to stoop to downright forgery. He asserted that the Lucerne Memorial had set forth the following arguments: 'In the United States where the Church is composed of immigrant nations that are already civilized and christianized, but differ in character, habits and customs, as well as language, this need of national Bishops representing the respective nations makes itself imperiously felt....The sole and only way to attain concord and harmony among the different nations that go to make up the Church of the United States is to give to every one of these nations Bishops of their own who will represent their respective nations in the episcopal body. Every nation that has not its own Bishops is an uncrowned nation, a nation without chiefs, without protectors, without guides of its own, a nation without head, a decapitated nation, that feels itself profoundly humiliated, sacrificed, a discontented and jealous nation, a nation that will never live in harmony with better favored nations which it accuses of defrauding it of its rights and of wounding it in its sacred interests....'

"Moreover,' the Senator added, arbitrarily 'quoting' other passages of the Memorial, 'this question affects the interests of the countries from which emigration takes place. Through their emigrants nations are acquiring in the great Republic an influence and an importance of which they will one day be able to make good profit. These nations are so well aware of this that they are doing everything in their power to have those of their nationalities settled in the United States develop and strengthen themselves in every

respect.' 'There was never,' the Senator concluded dramatically, 'a more infamous attempt to prostitute religious power to political purposes than the one proposed in the Memorial. The time has come when governments can no longer remain indifferent to this grave and important question.'

“The spirit of jingoism, which a few years later, with the cooperation of the same Davis, brought on war with Spain and took the country into the field of world politics, was rampant in those days. But more objectionable than the jingoistic tenor of the speech was that fact that – in conformity with distortions partly coming from Catholic sources! – it perverted a document of purely charitable and religious character into a political pasquil – worse, to add insult to injury, an inane declamation. And Catholic editors and pamphleteers reprinted and even indorsed that silly bombast. It is one of the psychological riddles of our days that Oxnam and the Blanshards have thus far ignored the scandalous charges of the Honorable Cushman K. Davis.

* * *

“Cahensly defended himself vigorously against the distortions and insults in Senator Davis' speech. He replied in a statement to the press and addressed to the Senator an Open Letter published in *The Wanderer* of June 15, 1892. Copies of his press statement and the Letter (almost four columns in *The Wanderer*, together with translations of the Memorial, etc., were forwarded to the Senator. As he stated later in his booklet on the St. Raphael's Society, Cahensly 'repudiated the misstatements and exaggerations and emphasized that he and the other signers of the [Lucerne] petition were governed solely by religious motives.'

“Cahensly, in his Open Letter, took up one charge after another, unequivocally denying the assertion that [Ludwig] Windthorst [January 17, 1812 – March 14, 1891, was a German politician of the Catholic Center Party, the most notable opponent of Chancellor Otto von Bismarck], the German Representative von Schloezer, and other statesmen and diplomats, have been involved in the Lucerne Memorial and its submission in Rome, and trying to explain to his superficial antagonist the real purposes and aims of the St. Raphael's Society. He gave the Senator a synopsis of the history of the organization, pointing out that 'in the past twenty years 400,000 emigrants received, free of charge, advice and assistance,' and added that the only country benefiting from these charitable activities was the United States since the German emigrants, with very rare exceptions, had gone to America to stay there. He accused the Senator of having set up a bugbear ('Popanz') by arbitrarily distorting and misconstruing the text of the Memorial.

“Not knowing the Senator personally, Cahensly advanced arguments which were completely foreign to the reasoning of that politician. He was particularly anxious to clear up what he thought was a mere misunderstanding on the part of the Senator in

regard to the attention European countries paid to the welfare of settlers overseas. 'The preservation of religion is an imperative prerequisite of social, economic and political order, in public and private life, on your side of the Atlantic as well as on ours. Religion has become an all-important public matter of all civilized countries and all governments, since the Socialist heresy has organized on an international scope and threatens the foundations of all nations and governments. American freedom, which I have always highly esteemed, permits every individual full participation in industry and commerce and in the political and social life of the nation. European countries and their governments cannot be indifferent to the danger that their emigrants to America, the far-reaching influence of which on the Old World is growing rapidly, might succumb to the allurements of Socialism because of religious neglect. America, at least those Americans who cherish Christianity and wish to save the nation from the Socialist peril, ought to be grateful to European countries that try, as far as they can within their own jurisdiction, to save America from the Red Deluge....It is self-understood, of course, that they cannot shall not, and will not meddle in American affairs.' Quoting extensively from Richmond Mayo Smith's book, *Emigration and Immigration*, Cahensly in this connection advocated international cooperation for the avoidance of misunderstandings and frictions and for the solution of the problems in both the emigration and immigration countries.

“In conclusion, Cahensly made a gentleman's appeal to the Senator. He wrote: 'As a member of a legislative body of one of the foremost European States I request of a member of the highest legislative body of the North American Union compliance with a duty toward a colleague, namely, that the Senator avail himself of the first opportunity to announce at the Capitol in Washington my statement: “My efforts have no connection whatever with any political powers in Europe”.'

“That was a modest request which a gentleman could not refuse. But Cahensly received neither the courtesy of a factual statement nor an apology. Davis informed the press Cahensly's letter 'will not change my views as to the enormity of his offense against our institutions,' and his personal answer to Cahensly's letter was little more than an acknowledgment of receipt.

“But Cahensly was fully exonerated by another American, Archbishop Corrigan [of New York], who, in spite of his opposition to the Lucerne Memorial, never had withdrawn his confidence from him, and held him high esteem to the end of his life. On September 26th, 1892, a few months after the infamous speech of Senator Davis, Archbishop Corrigan, addressing the German-American *Katholikentag* at Newark, said in regard to 'Cahenslyism': 'From letters which I have received from the other side I can say positively that there was no political end in view in the measure. It was intended solely to benefit the spiritual welfare of the immigrant by keeping him for a time among those who know his language.... The secretary of the St. Raphael's Society, Herr Peter Paul Cahensly, at once accepted that decision [of the Holy See], and he accepted it loyally. I

received a letter from him yesterday declaring that he submits in all things to the judgment of the Holy See.'

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“President Harrison, too, was greatly interested in the Cahensly controversy. The biographer of Cardinal Gibbons gives an account of a conversation the President had with His Eminence at Cape May, in July 1891. 'The attempt to introduce the question of nationality in selections for the episcopate appeared to him to have a great potency for harm, and he expressed his unbounded satisfaction that the movement had been checked. He said he had sometimes thought of writing the Cardinal on the subject, but hesitated lest he might be interfering. The Cardinal told the President that he was much pleased to hear his views, and suggested that, as he had contemplated writing a letter on the subject, it might not be too late even yet to express his views in that form. General Harrison replied that, while he feared “burning his fingers” by meddling in ecclesiastical questions, he had no objection to the Cardinal stating his views in a letter to authorities in Rome. The Cardinal transmitted to Mgr [!] Rampolla a full account of the conversation, and received a prompt reply, expressive of the satisfaction which these facts created in the Vatican' (Allen S. Will, *Life of Cardinal Gibbons*, 1911, pp. 246-247.)”

And thus ends Part XXVI of Joseph Matt's “Centenary.”

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For a little more perspective on the controversies of the day that Joseph Matt was recalling in his remarkable history of the “Cahensly controversy,” let's take a look at a couple items from Arthur Preuss' *The Review*, published in St. Louis.

From the November 14, 1901 edition of *The Review*, which preoccupied itself with some of the raging “education” issues of the day – this on whether or not the public should pay for text books in the state schools. (FTM could find no information on Judge Neely, so this report has to stand by itself.

“The gist of Judge Neely's recent decision in the legal fight for free text-books in the public schools of Chicago, is that under the constitution and statutes of the State of Illinois the Board of Education of the City of Chicago has no power to furnish free school-books, and that further legislation will be necessary to vest the Board with that authority.

“The *Chicago Chronicle* (Nov. 8th) thinks that the practical effect of this decision – which, by the way, is not final, the case having been appealed by the Board – 'should be

to cause the abandonment of this and other semi-Socialistic ideas for good.'

“But will it? The *Record-Herald* (no date) points out that, while the legislature has not yet got so far on the Socialistic path, if Judge Neely's decision is sustained by the higher courts it will be besieged by a powerful Socialistic lobby. It is not so hard to push a bill through the legislature when there are powerful influences to back it.

“The remedy, in the opinion of the paper last mentioned, lies in this that the public should be made acquainted with those principles and policies which it was not Judge Neely's duty to pass upon, but which underlie the whole question at issue.

“Does it (the public) believe that people who are able to supply their children with books should appeal to the State for aid?”

“Of course it does; just as it believes that people who are fully able to educate their children should appeal to the State for schools and teachers and utensils. Given the Socialist foundation of our entire public school system, it is difficult to see how the ultimate sequelae can be avoided. Free school-books are bound to come, and free shoes, free clothes, free luncheons too. And the sooner they come, the better; for it will take a strong *reductio ad absurdum* to make the people at large understand the true principles underlying education.”

* * *

From the December 19, 1901 *Review*, under the heading, “Educational Topics”:

“A recent book by a Mr. Gorst, under the title 'The Curse of Education,' brings a terrible indictment against present methods and tendencies in modern education. It is extreme in its views, but nevertheless has a solid substratum of truth, too much indeed to be relished by the faddists who now hold the reins. He describes some of the results as 'Flourishing Mediocrity,' 'Square Pegs in Round Holes,' 'The Destruction of Genius,' 'The Greatest Misery of the Greatest Number,' 'The Output of Prigs,' 'Boy Degeneration,' 'Mental Breakdown,' etc.

“Dr. Pallen, in the *Pittsburg Observer* [No. 28], comments thereon sanely and strongly as follows :

“These results are true enough as education is now organized in its defective secularism. In other words, it is imperfect education that brings about these disastrous effects ; it is education without the wheel of of morality, education without religion. The radical fault in the educational system of the day is, that it holds up education as an end in itself, as the panacea of all human ills, the summum bonum of the race. As a result it is neither prudent nor discriminate in its administration and its application. It begets a

false notion of life and an ideal utterly incompatible with the conditions and circumstances of the vast majority. It therefore breeds discontent, fosters unrealizable aspirations, both crude and cruel. It is an insane system, i. e., it breeds unsound minds.

“Instead of giving balance to character it unsettles and distorts it. Hence the round pegs in square holes, degeneracy and mental breakdown with all the other attending ills, which Mr. Gorst rehearses. But this by no means leads to the conclusion that education in itself is a curse. To train and develop human faculties and powers, to form and guide character with discretion and prudence as a means to higher ends is a blessing to mankind. This cannot be done without religion as the informing spirit of the process. It is in this essential point that secularized education makes its dismal failure and leads to the abnormalities which Mr. Gorst stigmatizes so vigorously....”

Certainly, one hundred years later, we see that Mr. Gorst was spot-on.

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A number of readers have questioned why *The Wanderer* is reprinting former *Wanderer* editor Joseph Matt's 35-part series, “A Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota,” published in late 1950-early-1951.

The answer, briefly, is that the controversies he was writing about, and an eye-witness to in the latter years of the 19th century, are crucial to understanding the origins of the American Church and the rise of a modernist faction that would come to dominate in the mid-20th century U.S. Church.

It is a common for so-called “conservative” and/or “orthodox” Catholics to bemoan the “leftward” drift of the U.S. Church since Vatican II; but at a time when the U.S. bishops' “relationship” with the U.S. Government is unraveling, it is important to understand that the U.S. bishops didn't “get into bed” with the Washington in the 1960s and '70s with its “Call To Action” agenda or the Campaign for Human Development. Neither did the U.S. bishops hop into bed with the Government in the 1930s with its support for Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. Nor did it “get into bed” with the Government for the first time at World War I, when Cardinal James Gibbons marshaled Catholic power to enlist Catholic men and boys into his global crusade to make the “world safe for democracy.”

No, as Joseph Matt shows so persuasively, the U.S.bishops “got into bed” with the Government through the efforts of Cardinal Gibbons and Archbishop John Ireland of St. Paul with their effort to assimilate immigrant Catholics – especially Germans – by undermining their efforts on behalf of their Catholic schools, and by back-handed schemes and propaganda campaigns to paint German Catholics as enemies of American democracy.

Something else was at work as well, as Matt shows: Gibbons and Ireland and their cohort were, in every sense of the words, the original “independent contractors,” Americanist Catholics who viewed Rome with suspicion, who did not want Rome interfering in their project to build an “American Catholic” Church in the United States that downplayed doctrine and discipline and was an ally of the government in keeping the fires burning under the American melting pot that led to religious indifferentism and the rise of the bureaucratic state.

* * *

In Part XXVIII of Matt's “Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota,” published April 19, 1951, with the subhead, “Archbishop Falconio's Epilogue.” *The Wanderer's* late editor laments how 'Americanists' prolonged the “Cahensly controversy” to advance Secularist goals.

* * *

“The scandalous defamation of Cahensly and the St. Raphael's Society by Senator Cushman K. Davis should have served as a warning that it was time to call a halt to the conflict which as seriously disturbing peace and harmony among Catholics,” wrote Joseph Matt. “But the spokesmen for 'Americanism' were not satisfied with the decisions of the Holy See which in view of stormy protests had rejected the proposals of the Lucerne Memorial. *Roma locuta, causa finita* – Rome has spoken and the dispute is therefore ended, Prof. Dr. Joseph Schroeder of the Catholic University urged in confidential letters to Archbishop Corrigan with whom he was on intimate terms. But the leaders of the 'Americanist' movement were not inclined to drop the matter, on the contrary, continued to promote the quarrel which aroused a Secularist public opinion and allied with the innovations advocated by 'Americanism.' The conflict has long since reached far beyond the nationality and language question and revealed with increasing insistence a readiness to make concessions not only to indigenous conditions and legitimate national peculiarities but also to Secularistic trends.

“The cause of 'Americanism' up to that time had won only meager success and in the School Question had suffered a defeat which was only thinly veiled by the diplomatic wording of the decision on the Faribault Plan. In addition, there were disquieting signs of spreading opposition, an opposition which was no longer confined to 'reactionaries,' 'refrataires,' 'foreigners,' 'Germans and Jesuits,' 'Cahenslyites,' and 'ultramontanes,' as the opponents were called in public denouncements. The opposition was joined in increasing numbers by men whose conscientious Catholic attitude could not be impugned with the stigma of 'foreignism' and 'exoticism' – for instance, Archbishop Michael Augustine Corrigan of New York and Bishop Bernard John McQuaid of

Rochester, both men of personal virtues as well as of eminent knowledge.

“Checked by the wise reserve of the Holy See and the stiffening resistance at home, the leaders of 'Americanism' appealed with increasing vehemence to the Secularist public opinion – against 'Rome' and the exponents of Catholic conservatism in our own country.

“The rabid anti-Cahensly speech of Senator Cushman K. Davis was the first public move of this strategy. Archbishop Ireland himself strengthened the belief that he was behind the Senator's speech, when, ignoring disavowals and corrections, he publicly expressed views practically identical with those of the Senator. He stated them in press interviews, in the articles of the Rev. Conway in the *St. Paul Northwestern Chronicle*, and in his celebrated Parish address of June 18, 1892. In this address, which he gave while on his journey homeward from Rome where he had defended his school policy, he said (alluding 'to the Memorial presented in 1891 to the Holy See by Herr Peter Paul Cahensly,' as an explanatory footnote stated):

“Recently, as your papers have informed you, a memorial was addressed by some Catholics in Germany to the Holy See, asking that, in the nomination of Bishops in the United States, the question of nationality be taken into account, and that German, Italian, French, Polish and Bohemian priests be appointed in proportion to the number of Catholics of those respective nationalities. The American Episcopate at once forwarded to Rome a formal protest against this memorial, and their protest was heeded. Had the memorial been listened to by the Holy See, the Episcopate of America would now be an object of suspicion to the Government, and Catholics would be looked upon as foreigners encamped upon the soil of the Republic. We choose our Bishops, and will always choose them, from among priests worthy of the Episcopate, irrespective of their origin and nationality; we will never allow foreigners to impose Bishops upon us' (Ireland, *The Church and Modern Society*, D.H. McBride & Co., Chicago and New York, 1896, p. 371).

* * *

“It stands to reason that statements of this kind kept the quarrel alive and roused the opponents of 'Americanism' to defend their case before the bar of world opinion where they had been accused,” wrote Matt.

“At the Catholic Congress of Germany held in Mainz in 1892, Prof. Dr. Schroeder gave an address on 'true and false Cahenslyism.' The indefatigable effort of a Catholic man of honor trying to help solve an important part of the Social Question in accordance with the principles of unselfish charity by assisting, as a tool of Divine Providence, in the improvement of the lot of poor and helpless emigrants exposed to great physical and

spiritual dangers – that, the speaker said, is unstained and undiluted. 'Cahenslyism' to which no Christian can object. And that, he continued, is the only reality to which the name of Peter Paul Cahensly may honestly be applied. But, he said, there was a bugaboo which some efficient gentlemen had fixed up and called 'Cahenslyism.' In repudiating this 'false Cahenslyism,' the speaker distinguished between the cabals unjustly impugned to Cahensly himself, and, on the other hand, the stigmatizing of a number of Catholic activities with the word 'Cahenslyism' twisted into a disreputable meaning.

“The personal attacks on Cahensly, Dr. Schroeder stated, were partly based on the charge that he had calumniated the American Episcopate when he asserted that many millions of Catholic had lost their faith in America because of the insufficient number of priests able to teach them the Christian truths in their mother tongue. Those losses are a reality, the speaker said, and their actual number is a secondary question. At any rate, Cahensly had not accused the American Episcopate and clergy of responsibility for those losses. Nor had he advocated interference of European governments.

“Misusing the terms 'Cahenslyism' and 'Cahenslyites' in a twisted sense, Dr. Schroeder continued, propagandists apply them to Catholics, Bishops, priests and laymen, German, French and Slav Catholics who cultivate their mother tongue and erect and promote Catholic schools in which, besides the language of the country, their native tongue also find a place. Catholic organizations and Catholic congresses are being maligned as tools of 'Cahenslyism' and outstanding Catholics, as for instance Judge Dunne, have been called 'Cahenslyists' merely because they had criticized the Public schools and demanded fairness for the Catholic schools. He himself, Dr. Schroeder added, and his colleagues at the Catholic University, Prof. Dr. Pohle, had been accused of 'Cahenslyism' for similar reasons but felt quite comfortable in the company of such men as Archbishop Corrigan, Archbishop Katzer, Bishop McQuaid, Bishop Messmer and other members of the Hierarchy. Prof. Pohle unreservedly indorsed the statements of Dr. Schroeder.

“The Sixth German-American Katholikentag, held in Newark, N.J., in September 1892, also replied to the attacks. Archbishop Corrigan and the Bishops Wigger, Janssen and Richter participated. Archbishop Corrigan warmly praised the German Catholics, particularly for their consistent and successful efforts in the interest of Catholic education, and expressed his confidence in Cahensly in words which in view of the attacks in the preceding months were of a demonstrative character. (Corrigan 'was positive that Cahensly was being seriously maligned,' *Cath. Hist. Rev.*, vol. 32, p. 330). Dr. Schroeder, in effect, repeated what he had said at Mainz and in addition refuted the intemperate assertions put forth by the Rev Conway in the *Review of Reviews*. One of the resolutions, which was also forwarded to the Holy Father, deplored the uncharitable and unfair attacks which, with little regard for truth and facts, aroused nationalistic prejudices and passions against coreligionists.

“An eminent Swiss writer, Prof. Dr. Anton Gisler, who died as Auxiliary Bishop of Chur in 1932, discussed the question of American losses in a scholarly work. Repudiating the attitude of the 'Americanists' and their French propagandists, particularly M. Brunetiere, he said, 'It was unfair to accuse the men of the St. Raphael's Societies, especially M. Cahensly, of calumny.' His figures 'squared with the realities much closer than Ireland's and O'Gorman's figures of 1 ½ -2 ½ millions.' However, the Swiss scholar readily admitted: 'The surprising thing is not that losses occurred in America, but that so many remained in the Church. In spite of all losses, the growth of the Church in the land of the Star-Spangled Banner remains not only one of the glories of the Church, but also a great hope for the future.' – Gisler, *Der Modernismus*, Benziger & Co., Einsiedeln, 3rd ed., 1912, p. 96. – Cf. also Dr. Beda Kleinschmidt, O.F.M., *Auslanddeutschetum unk Kirche*, Meunster 1930, Bd. 1, p.87 seq.)

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“It was hardly mere coincidence that the American Protective Association (A.P.A.), founded in Clinton, Iowa, in 1887, but barely known in the first years of its existence, made considerable progress – in a development practically parallel to that of the nationality and language controversy. It was to some extent a successor to the Knownothing movement of the Fifties and at times claimed a membership of 2 ½ million. The A.P.A. fought for the disfranchisement of Catholics and, fortunately, was destined to failure by its suicidal fanaticism. Outstanding leaders of the old parties – Theodore Roosevelt, Governor Altgeld (Illinois), Stone (Missouri), Peck (Wisconsin), the Senators Hoar, Vest, Reed, John Sherman, and others – strenuously opposed the movement. The A.P.A. never succeeded in gaining prestige in national politics, its only significant success was the denial of Federal money to the Catholic Indian schools. Its field of activity was confined mostly to State and municipal politics. Kansas City, which has remained a hotbed of corruption to this day, was its first conspicuous base. At the turn of the century, it was practically out of existence although it retained a semblance of organization. Today a number of anti-Catholic organizations, under the leadership of the Oxnam, Blanshards, etc., are continuing the policies of the Knownothings and A.P.A.'s with somewhat changed methods but in the same spirit of intolerance,” wrote Matt.

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“A dozen years later, the representative of the Holy Father spoke the epilogue of the nationality and language conflict. The Papal Delegate, Archbishop Diomedea Falconio, who died as a Cardinal in 1917, had attended the annual convention of the Catholic Central Verein in Cincinnati (1905) and Dubuque (1907) and again participated in the convention of the organization in Indianapolis in 1909. At Dubuque, Msgr. George Heer had arranged for the officers and members of the Committee on Resolutions a private audience in the rectory, at which His Excellency graciously listened to statements on the

history, principles and aims of the Verein. In Indianapolis, Archbishop Falconio granted an audience to the members of the Committee on Social Action, which had been appointed a year before, and freely discussed with them the scope of their program. He also addressed the public meetings on two occasions. In his first address, at the mass meeting on Sunday, he said:

“...I have an additional reason to congratulate the Central Verein. The past year was of particular significance in your history. A number of your members were in Rome to pay homage to the Holy Father in Behalf of the German Catholics in America. That meeting with the Holy Father left a deep impression. It showed anew that the German Catholics are of strong faith and that their devotion to the Holy Father is always the same. That was a great consolation for the heart of the Holy Father and his blessing must have encouraged you bravely and faithfully to continue your noble efforts for the welfare of your country and the Church.’

“His Excellency appeared unexpectedly at a later session of the delegates, because, as he expressed it, before leaving Indianapolis he wanted to visit them once more to show his great interest in their work. After having sketched the history of the organization he continued: 'The Central Verein is performing a good and great service. You strengthen in your children the faith of your noble forbears and steel their character so that they will resist temptations, thus educating them to become loyal Christian citizens. We are in need of Catholic societies of this kind, today more than ever, and particularly in the United States where the passion for worldly possessions and pleasure is shaking the foundations of a Christian social order. The material progress of the United States [where the Archbishop had acquired citizenship] is indeed amazing, but material progress and prosperity are not sufficient to make individuals and families happy. The spirit of the Gospel must be revived in all of us and your society must set an example of Christian virtues, Christian faith and Christian fortitude. Of the Germans it is said that they are strong and dependable, that they know what they are striving for. I, therefore, have no doubt that your efforts will be crowned with success and that the strong German character will be of the greatest benefit to the future welfare of America, in helping to preserve the Christian character of the American people'....”

(To be continued)

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After reprinting the conclusion of Part XXVII of Joseph Matt's “Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota,” dealing with “Archbishop Falconio's Epilogue,” we will, again, try to highlight the importance – and relevance – of Matt's comprehensive history of the “Cahansly conspiracy” and the conflict within the U.S. Church between the “Americanists” led by Cardinal James Gibbons of Baltimore and Archbishop Ireland of

St. Paul and Rome's "loyalists" led by Archbishop Michael Corrigan of New York and others, especially the German bishops of the Midwest with some *New York Times* reports from the era that illustrate the battle for the American Church in the last decade of the 19th century.

Part XXVII, "Archbishop Falconio's Epilogue," continues:

"Last summer [Matt is quoting the Archbishop, the Apostolic Delegate to the United States] I had the great pleasure of visiting the Basilica of St. Boniface at Fulda. And when I was kneeling at the tomb of the Saint, I thought of the marvelous history of the German nation and I prayed to God that through the intercession of St. Boniface He bestow the richest blessings on the German people. But then my heard and mind turned to the Germans in the United States and I prayed fervently that the spirit of your noble ancestors be with you always, that you, strong in faith, may give to all other nationalities an edifying example of religious and civil virtues. May the spirit of Windthorst and Ketteler abide with you and inspire all members of this great and glorious Central Verein to continue your work with zeal and perseverance, and you may rest assured that God will bless your undertakings and grant them the fulness of success. And now, before I take leave, I want to impart the special blessing of the Holy Father.'

"The delegates, according to the official convention report, went down on their knees in deep emotion, but then rising again, tendered Archbishop Falconio a jubilant ovation.

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"It was also at Indianapolis," Matt recalled, "that the representative of the Holy Father encouraged the German Catholics in America to celebrate St. Boniface Day every year. Such celebrations were held in many cities before the First World War, and were later revived in St. Paul at the urgent invitation of Archbishop Dowling and Archbishop Murray. Thousands gathered at the Cathedral on St. Boniface Day on several successive years to listen to sermons by the Archbishop, the present Papal Nuncio to Germany Archbishop Meunch, Abbot Alcuin Deutsch, O.S.B., and others, and to pray to the Apostle of the Germans, and visit his chapel behind the high altar.

"*Tempi passati* – times that have been! Future generations will look in vain for a satisfactory explanation of the disappearance of a festival founded on religion and tradition and warmly recommended by ecclesiastical authorities and the representative of the Holy Father. Some will find the answer in the two big wars with their devastating effects on everything of German origin. Those looking beyond the surface and meditating on other symptoms of our days very likely will come to the conclusion that, for a number of reasons, religious life in the transition to a new period had lost some of the vigor of the 'steerage age' disdainfully looked up by present-day activists and

progressivists.

“Those manifestations of by-gone days were not essential to Catholic life and some of their colorful features (parade, music bands, etc.) may even have had a tinge of worldliness. But, taken as a whole, they confirmed the statement of Madame de Stael – in which the 'Pagan of Weimar,' Goethe, concurred when he witnessed a pilgrimage at the Rochusberg near Bingen – that festivals rooted in the sentiment of the people and sanctified by the Church present a wholesome and harmonious combination of human joy and religious fervor.

“We need both in our days and is a hopeful sign that public religious manifestations are regaining the old fervor. They may prove an effective antidote to defeatism and hopelessness in the present world crisis.”

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Let's now take a look at how the *New York Times*, which had an almost-obsessive preoccupation with the Cahensly controversy, covered the “conspiracy,” with scandalous misrepresentations – most likely, one would assume, generated in St. Paul.

Here is a June 5, 1891 report from the *Times* on Archbishop Ireland's protest of the Lucerne Memorial. The headline reads, simply, “CATHOLIC CHURCH IN AMERICA,” with the subhead, “Archbishop Ireland Talks on Insolent Foreign Intermeddling.”

“ST PAUL, June 4 – Since the publication of his interview of a few days ago regarding the cabled reports of the petition to the Pope for the districting of foreign immigrants in America on national lines, Archbishop Ireland has had many telegrams and letters of indorsement of his views. Today he said to an Associated Press correspondent that, as the details of the plot are unfolded, the indignation of American Catholics or Protestants cannot but grow in intensity. 'Catholics are mortified,' he said, 'that their religion is made the occasion and the pretense of this insolent foreign intermeddling. The Prussian Ambassador, von Schloezer, is not afraid to declare that he viewed the appointment of Archbishop Katzer to the See of Milwaukee as favorable to German interests. If things are allowed to go much further, we may soon expect a cablegram announcing that Herr von Schloezer has claimed in the name of the Kaiser the right to veto our appointments of a dozen of Episcopal Sees in the United States.

“So long as the Church in America is fit only to be portioned off to the care of foreign countries, why would not any foreigners, however small he be, ask for a piece? Hence we find M. Mercier, the Minster of the Province of Quebec, a mere colony of England, who happened to meet in Rome Herr Cahensly, running to the Vatican and praying in the

name of his little constituency, that a Canadian Bishop be named for the See of Ogdensburg in the State of New York. M. Mercier, we must say, is modest. He should, when once started, have aimed at higher game and asked that the See of Boston or New York be handed over to his patronage. We can easily picture a further extension of this foreign ambition to rule Catholic affairs in America. In a few years the ecclesiastical map of the country would show the fingerings of every foreign principality whose emigrants chose to touch our shores.

“This attack of foreignism upon the Church in America is killed from its own audacity. Indeed, the outcome will be most favorable to Church and to country. Catholics in America, whatever the race from which they have sprung, will be more vigilant in defense of their rights, both as Catholics and Americans.”

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The *New York Times* was publishing, almost daily, at least twice-weekly through the summer and fall of 1891, reports on the “Cahensly conspiracy.” Here is one from July 25, 1891, headlined, “CAHENSLEY'S OBNOXIOUS PLAN,” with the subhead, “Prompt Repudiation by the American Catholic Hierarchy.”

“BALTIMORE, July 24 – A Cape May special to the *Baltimore Sun* says: 'At the next meeting of the Catholic hierarchy of the United States a letter of thanks will be sent to the Pope in the name of the Bishops of the country, thanking him for having rejected the petition of Herr Cahensly and his associates.

“The hierarchy looked upon the memorial as unwarrantable interference with the business of the Catholic Church in the United States. To a man, the Bishops were against it. It was believed that the scheme would bring ruin and anarchy where peace now exists. The consequences of two Bishops in the same territory would be disastrous. The petition was considered an insult to the American hierarchy, and the Bishops were prepared to resent it if necessary. It is more than likely that in some sections of the country the laymen would have been called upon to assemble in mass meeting and denounce the work of meddlers. The Bishops, individually and collectively, believe there should be no race in the United States, and some of them are in favor of the Government taking positive action in suppressing the teaching of any language in any school but the English language.

“The trouble over the Cahensly petition, it is said, grew out of the scheming of a clique of Catholics of foreign birth in this country who have been endeavoring to perpetuate this foreign idea in the United States. While the American Catholics were unsuspecting, the others worked at their scheme. They went outside the regular channels that reach the Pope and wrote to men in Rome and other European cities, who believed their one-sided

statements.

“If they imagined their efforts would go unnoticed, they were in grave error, for the American hierarchy was prepared to denounce the whole affair. The Bishops saw that nationalization could not live in this land. The emigrant of today is the citizen of tomorrow. It takes but a generation or two to obliterate his language and habits. To force upon him his mother tongue is to do him a great injustice. It keeps him in the background in more ways than one. The business of the Nation, commercially and politically, is carried on in the English language, and the man who cannot speak that tongue in this country is at a disadvantage. The pride of the American hierarchy, expressed by the Bishops, is that the Church in the United States is an American Church just as the Church in France is French, in Germany German, in England English, in Spain Spanish, in Brazil Portuguese. In all those countries emigrants have to conform to the language of those countries. This fact made the Bishops all the more indignant at the attempt of Herr Cahensly.

“Since the rejection by the Pope of the petition, it is believed the instigators of it in this country were moved by hopes of self-aggrandizement. A few narrow-minded persons, whose world is known to be the village where their mother tongue is spoken, were grasping after authority, and certain newspapers, whose living is impaired by the growth of the English language, were on the lookout for their own interests. If there is any one characteristic of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church more prominent than another it is that it is American, and to make it such Cardinal Gibbons has been laboring for years. He believes that every Catholic Bishop should be first and foremost a patriot, because he is a large property holder and his country's interests are his. Secondly, the Catholic Bishop is a leader of the people, and should in his life and work show the character of patriotism.

“Archbishop Ireland has joined Cardinal Gibbons. He arrived in time yesterday to be present at a birthday anniversary dinner given by Mr. Cockroft Thomas, a Philadelphia merchant, in honor of the Cardinal. It was the fifty-seventh anniversary of the birth of Cardinal Gibbons.

'At the residence of the Cardinal in this city telegrams and letters were received in great numbers yesterday and today. They all testified to the esteem in which his Eminence is held, both at home and abroad, and congratulated him upon his attitude regarding the Cahensly memorial. Churchmen and laymen alike join in congratulations and, whether native or adopted citizens, express the hope that foreign intermeddlers will learn the lesson that this is America and its people are Americans.’”

* * *

Two days later, the *Times* reported on the quarrel between German-speaking and English-speaking priests in St. Louis. While the German priests would not speak with the *Times*, Fr. David Phelan, editor of *The Western Watchman*, did. Followers of this series of articles will recall Joseph Matt's frequent references to Fr. Phelan for his frequent attacks on Peter Paul Cahensly.

This report, published July 28, was headlined, "THE WAR OF THE PRIESTS," with the subhead, "Father Phelan With Draw from the Jubilee Committee."

"ST LOUIS, July 27 -- The trouble between the German priests and other priests growing out of the denunciation of the Cahensly memorial seems to have reached a climax. Father Phelan, editor of the *Western Watchman*, the most influential Catholic paper in the West, has been pouring hot shot into the German Priests' Society in such a merciless manner that they have turned on him.

"For some time preparations have been in progress for the golden jubilee of Archbishop Kenrick on a scale that promises the most imposing Catholic demonstration ever witnessed in the United States. It has been an open secret that in these preparations there was a lack of harmony between the German and other priests. The meetings have all been secret, and successful efforts have been made to prevent the publication of all that transpired. It is positively learned today that just before the meeting of the jubilee Executive Committee last Tuesday the German members held a caucus, and a delegation waited on Vicar General Brady, the Chairman, and informed him that either Father Phelan should leave the committee or they would resign. Father Brady told Father Phelan of the resolution, and he resigned rather than have any dissensions in the committee. He saw the strength of their position, and, like a true soldier, he gave up his sword.

"The committee is made up of thirteen members, seven English-speaking and six German-speaking clergymen, with Father Brady as Chairman. The German members of the committee of Father Muhlsiepen, German Vicar General; Father Geers, Father Wilmes, Father Brockmeyer, Father Schrage, and Father Hoffman. Their position was as strong as Gibraltar, for if they carried out their threats the preparations for the jubilee would have come pretty near going up in smoke. Several of the German priests, when seen, admitted that such a caucus had been held, but declined to give details. Father Faerbaer, the reputed real author of the Cahensly memorial, admitted that he knew all about the matter, but excused himself from making a statement. Father Phelan talked freely, explaining at length that he had resigned in the interest of harmony.

"Is it true as reported that some of the German clergy intend to denounce you from the pulpit on account of your position on the Cahensly letters, and they are going to use their influence among their parishioners to reduce the subscription list of the *Western*

Watchman?

“Yes, I've heard that they were not only going to do it, but they had already done it; that, in fact, several of them hauled me over the coals yesterday.’

“Will their action affect in any way the tone of your editorials in regard to the Cahensly matter?’

“Not in the least. On questions of public policy I hold that I have a perfect right to conduct my paper as my conscience dictates, and nothing that my German brothers have said or done, or will say or do, can deter me from pursuing that policy.”

* * *

Next week we will continue with Part XVIII of Matt's series, this one subtitled, “Americanism.”

###

With Part XXVIII, through the conclusion of “A Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota,” Joseph Matt focuses on the “Americanism” condemned by Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical *Testem Benevolentiae* as the fount of the Modernism later condemned by Pope St. Pius X.

Below is Part XXVIII, published in *The Wanderer* April 26, 1951.

* * *

“After Pope Leo XIII, in the brief *Testem Benevolentiae*, of January 22, 1899, had condemned 'Americanism' there was much talk about errors having been repudiated which had been unjustly, if not spitefully imputed to leaders of American Catholics thought by French translators and quarrelsome polemics. The defense of 'Americanism' was overplayed even more crudely by speakers and writers who claimed that the fight against 'Americanism' was at bottom nothing but another chapter of the intrigues of 'Cahenslyism' – which, for propagandistic reasons, the exponents of the new ideas in conjunction with the Secularist press and politicians had pilloried and denounced as anti-American.

“In a pretentious book (earlier editions of which had abstained from uncritical comments), Msgr. Bernard O'Reilly disdainfully spoke of 'super-sensitive alarmists, if not interested disseminators of distrust,' and boldly asserted: 'The parties who endeavored to embroil the Church in a controversy over a thing of doubtful actuality (at

least in America) were much the same as those who had tried to make mischief over the Cahensly movement and the Washington University [i.e. Catholic University of America] rectorship. They found a pliant instrument in the person of the Abbe Maignen, a French priest who had incurred the censure of the Archbishop of Paris for a vile attack upon the Count de Mun....' (O'Reilly, *Life of Leo XIII*, John C. Winston Co., 1902, p.691) – The book was sold at the bargain counter of department stores; in the edition in my possession, Schuneman & Evans, St. Paul, is given as the publisher.

“Allen S. Will (whose book on Cardinal Gibbons depicted 'Cahenslyism' as the chief opponent of 'Americanism' produced the following gem of wisdom: 'As the letter [of Pope Leo] was sifted and its real meaning became clear, it began to be accepted that, while Leo XIII had directed his pious admonitions at real evils, they were not such as were characteristic of America; that they were merely abnormal views nurtured abroad, and, in correcting them, the Pontiff had performed a necessary service' (Will, *Life of Cardinal Gibbons*, John Murphy, Co., 1911, p.261).

“These tortuous explanations are almost reminiscent of Luther's appeal (in 1518) 'from an ill-informed Pope to a Pope in need of better information.' Their authors presumably did not intent insinuations of this kind. They argued with the queer logic of that controversial era and smugly followed Goethe's sarcastic advice to commentators – to supplant if you cannot supply facts.

“A few years later, an important work on Modernism was published. Its author was an outstanding scholar and pulpit orator, Dr. Anton Gisler, who died in 1932 as Coadjutor Bishop of Char, Switzerland. This eminent theologian carefully analyzing the errors of Modernism condemned by Pope Pius X in his incisive Encyclical *Pascendi* (1907), came to conclusions entirely different from those of O'Reilly, Will, and other apologists of 'Americanism.' He pointed out the close association of the 'Americanist' ideas and proposals with older European, particularly French, errors – and, by showing the American origin of Modernism, proved the fallacy of the contention that what Pope Leo XIII had condemned were actually European ideas wrongly imputed to America.

“It is the purpose of this book,' Bishop Gisler wrote in the Foreword, 'to discuss not only Modernism in the strict sense but also preceding and concurrent tendencies as well as the roots from which it stemmed – Americanism and modern apologetics. Since Pope Leo's breve *Testem Benevolentiae* Americanism is a concept fixed by ecclesiastical authority, and I found it advisable to treat German Reform Catholicism in conjunction with Americanism because it is not only closely associated with it ideologically but also succeeds it chronologically. Seeing little purpose in merely lamenting over Modernism and kindred tendencies. I believed it to be of the greatest importance to present a systematic synthesis and refutation. Only by this method could I hope to guide, rather than confuse, and to accomplish what many need – a specific apology against the basic

heresy of the age....' (Gisler, *Der Modernismus*, Benziger & Co., Einsiedeln, Switzerland, 3rd Ed, 1912, Preface).

“As indicated in these sentences, Gisler's work is not an ephemeral polemical treatise but a penetrating study. That fact is that the Swiss scholar was one of the foremost authorities on Modernism in all its ramifications. Moreover, he had sympathetic understanding of American national aspirations and spoke with great admiration of the achievements of the Catholic Church in the United States. But precisely because of his sympathies, his judgment on Americanism is of marked impartiality, putting conditions and personalities into the proper perspective. It is, therefore, safe to accept his evaluation of Americanism as conclusive – although it differs very substantially from opinions held not only when Americanism was a live issue but also in vogue in our days when it is an academic question of no consequence. Americanism commands too important a position in the history and development of Catholic thought to be brushed aside as a mere bagatelle.

“Gisler examined the essence of Americanism with unwavering love of truth and inexorable logic, carefully exposed the links connecting it, as the recipient with older tendencies particularly in France and its influence on modern European thinking, and showed the practical results of the application of the ideas of Americanism in the years preceding *Testem Benevolentiae*. The nationality and language conflict, the controversies concerning the relations between Church and State, particularly in the field of education, the Parliament of Religion, and other manifestations of Americanism, he discussed extensively. Most of these questions have been presented or at least mentioned, in preceding articles of this series. There have also been frequent references to strange indications of an excessive tolerance particularly in regard to secret societies. Bishop Gisler wrote in this connection: 'An exaggerated trend to interconfessionalism or aconfessionalism [interdenominationalism or non-sectarianism] was pursued by the Americanists in the question of non-sectarian or neutral secret societies. They defended Catholic participation in such organizations, tried to forestall episcopal action against the, and when the Holy See forbade such societies attempts were repeatedly made to mitigate or frustrate such inhibitions' (Ib. p. 102).

“The Roman Question, too, arising from the spoliation of the Papal States by the Piedmontese was a stumbling-block to Americanism. Extreme exponents of Americanism held that the idea of the temporal power of the Pope was not in conformity with democratic concepts, and the German-American Catholics who, following the example of the Catholics in Germany, always headed their convention resolutions with the demand for the restoration of the Patrimony of St. Peter were accused by them of staging such demonstrations for tactical purposes. Characteristic in this regard was the Rev. Zuercher's rude imputation that the German Catholics did not fight for principles but tried to bribe the Holy See and gain allies among the members of the American

Hierarchy for their plans and plots.

“After the Pope had rejected the Cahensly petition,' Zuercher wrote, 'the German party [!] changed its tactics. It tried to prove to the Pope and to the Cardinals that it alone in America was very loyal to the Pope on the subjects of temporal power, schools and secret societies. It was a wise move: it won a masterful ally in Archbishop Corrigan...'
(Zuercher, *Foreign Ideas in the Catholic Church in America*, East Aurora, 1896, p. 34).
Indorsing this attitude taken by the Catholics in Germany, the German-American Catholic Congresses in Buffalo (1891) and Newark (1892) had proposed an international Catholic congress for the purpose of urging the restoration of the temporal power of the Pope as an independent sovereign. Zuercher, like many others of his ilk, felt smugly satisfied when the *Catholic Union and Times* and other Americanist newspapers rejected the proposal, and praised exuberantly the resolutions adopted by the Columbian Catholic Congress (1893) because it ignored the German appeal for an international protest, refused to mention the temporal power, and, contrary to 'the Abbelen party' came out for temperance.

“These unfriendly comparisons obviously reflected disappointments and anger because the lines of demarcation in the defense against Americanism were becoming much clearer than they had been in the preceding controversies. It was no longer a 'foreign' minority against a powerful 'American' majority!”

* * *

To put into perspective the great drama of the 1890s that Joseph Matt is recalling in this extraordinary history of the era, let's look at a November 24, 1892 *New York Times* report, with the following headline and subheads: “THE GREAT PAPAL CONFAB -- What The Archbishops Talked Of In Their Conference -- Rome's Position on Parochial Schools Clearly Outlined -- Plan For Forcing State Aid -- The Matter of Textbooks -- The Conferrees Curious About Satolli.”

The report opened: “It is strange that no American newspaper should have been able to get the news of the recent archepiscopal conference. It is still stranger that the scope and objects of this conference have been generally misunderstood. The questions which the Archbishops were called to consider are of the utmost importance to the American Republic. They are even now looming up on the horizon of national politics. Their controlling force in some States of the West have been practically demonstrated. A voluminous literature has grown around the subject. In spite of all this, there is not only among the masses, but also among the intelligent classes, an ignorance concerning this question at once dangerous and profound.

“No apology seems, therefore, needed for an attempt to explain the matter. The

explanation might well be begun with a short review of the causes which made the second Roman Catholic Archepiscopal Conference so very important. The differences between the Romanizing elements under the leadership of Archbishop Corrigan, on the one hand, and the Americanizing faction, with Cardinal Gibbons and Archbishop Ireland, on the other, had reached a dangerous pitch, when the Archbishop of St. Paul unexpectedly went to Rome to fight 'the Germans and the Jesuits,' as he said. He was not called to Rome. Rome had not asked his views on any subject. The Propaganda had refused to take serious notice of the conflict within the ranks of the American hierarchy. Rome intended to remain passive and neutral. She followed her own policy, 'it can wait.'

“As Rome would not come to Ireland, Ireland went to Rome. He tarried in the Eternal City little less than half a year. This was almost without precedent...This extraordinary visit of Archbishop Ireland at the Vatican made Rome anxious. It was about the time of Ireland's visit that fears and doubts in regard to the Catholic liberal movement began to harass the Propaganda. Then the thought of sending that tried and trusted lieutenant, Satolli, once more to America took shape....”

This report then turns to the subject of Rome's acquiescence to Ireland's “Faribault Plan,” a reference to Ireland's plan to win State support for parochial schools, which involved the removal of all religious items from the schools, and the relegation of religious instruction to one or two hours a week. The report continued:

“Rome would indorse the Faribault Plan tomorrow if it could see its way clear to getting State support for all its parochial schools. It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of this revelation. During the conference the conservative element, which dominated the conference from the opening prayer to the hour of adjournment, propounded this question to the liberal prelates:

“Suppose we say yes to the Faribault plan, what next? Can you promise State aid will be forthcoming in every case where you want it and where we must have it? Are you able to assure Rome that the Faribault plan is practicable in the majority of the schools for which you claim a share of the public funds? How will your plan work in the larger cities?’

“It will be seen at once that the conservative element was fighting on vantage ground. The liberal prelates must have put themselves in a dilemma, no matter how they try to answer any of these questions...”

This *Times* report then shifted to the controversial subject of textbooks, produced by secular publishers used in Catholic schools, and moved on to the concerns of Rome that the American hierarchy was growing too independent amidst the growing insistence by the Americanists in the hierarchy that Rome stop interfering with the U.S. Church.

Under the subhead, “A Question of Authority,” the report continues:

“In connection with the conference it might be well to explain its authority as an ecclesiastical body. The authority is not great. The second annual conference of the Roman Catholic Archbishops of the United States did not act with certain delegated powers. The conference itself is, in fact, a perfect innovation. Its duplicate cannot be found in any other country in the world. What the conference is supposed to do, to wit, express views and confer with the object to report to Rome, is done by the Papal legate in every other country. The ideas of an archepiscopal conference is one those 'honest trifles' with which the Church tries to flatter American notions and customs. Whatever the conference may have decided is not binding in any way whatever. Its report is, of course, subject to the final action of the Propaganda. The report of Mgr. Satolli will count for a good deal more in Rome than the observations of the prelates. The conference was chiefly intended for home consumption. To bring the fighting Archbishops together at the same hospitable board and make a public display of hierarchical brotherly love was not the least of the objects of the conference. Rome realizes no less than the Archbishops that public sentiment has to be reckoned with in this country. Public sentiment was deeply interested in the factional split within the Church. The causes of the dissension may not have been thoroughly understood, yet with American methods of public discussion, and of free newspaper criticism, it could not be helped that the dispute became to some extent, at least, public property....”

When one reads such a *Times'* report as this, one sees how the *New York Times* played its stenographer role for Archbishop Ireland and the Americanists just as it did for the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin and the disgraced Archbishop Rembert Weakland a century later. Some things never change!

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Part XXIX of Joseph Matt's “Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota,” on “Americanism,” published May 3, 1951:

“In his treatise on Modernism in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* (vol. 10, p. 415) Fr. Arthur Vermeersch, S.J., points out that in the history of errors, 'practice often precedes theory,' that frequently false tendencies are in existence before doctrines are formulated to serve as their explanation and support. That holds true of Modernism which, as Pius X said, embraces every heresy, as well as of Americanism, which was among its herald and pioneers.

“Webster's *New International Dictionary*, whose definitions are usually cautious and

dependable, errs when it assumes that 'Heckerism' (L.c., p. 997), was the sum and substance of Americanism and the alpha and omega of its history. The fact is that Americanism had been a ferment agitating Catholic life in America for a number of years before the name of the celebrated founder of the Paulists was openly brought in connection with it. Father Walter Elliott's controversial book, *The Life of Father Hecker* (New York, 1891), was published three years after the death of Father Hecker and reached its fourth edition not before 1898, after the French translation with the ebullient introduction of Abbe Felix Klein and the critical reply of Abbe Charles Maignen (*Le Pere Hecker – est-il un saint?* Paris, 1898; *Father Hecker: Is He A Saint?* London and St. Louis 1898), had drawn it into the center of the controversy on Americanism.

“In other words, Americanism, in its tendencies and particularly in the practical application of these tendencies, preceded its development into a system which, in its ultimate manifestations, was condemned by Leo XIII in *Testem benevolentia*, on January 22, 1899. 'There was not even agreement in regard to the name,' writes Bishop Gisler. 'Some called it “Heckerism,” others “Kleinism,” others distinguished between a real and a false, a political and a religious Americanism' (*Der Modernismus* 3rd ed, p. 154). But then Pope Leo spoke the decisive word: 'We cannot approve the opinions which some comprise under the head of Americanism,' and explicitly set forth the errors he meant to reject.

“The Swiss Bishop speaks of 'the reconciliation of the Church with the world and conformity to the *Zeitgeist*' (the spirit of the time), as the wellspring of Americanism.' And Pope Leo writes in *Testem benevolentiae*: 'The principle on which the new opinions are based may be reduced to this: that, in order more easily to bring over to Catholic doctrine those who dissent from it, the Church ought to adapt herself to our advanced civilization, and, relaxing her ancient rigor, show some indulgence to modern popular theories and methods. Many think that this is to be understood not only with regard to the rule of life, but also to the doctrines in which the *deposit of faith* is contained. For they content that it is opportune, in order to work in a more attractive way upon the wills of those who are not in accord with us, to pass over certain heads of doctrine, as if of lesser moment, or so to soften them that they may not have the same meaning which the Church has invariably held...' (*The Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII*, Benziger Bros., 1903. Pp. 441-453.)

“Americanism had traversed a long road from the first manifestations of its aggressive spirit to that day of January, 1899, when Lope Leo proclaimed his stern warning. Characteristic of its aspirations, and the acclaim accorded to it even after its condemnation, is the following evaluation of a British writer: 'The uniform ideal of character, or rather of temperament, which obtains throughout the old Catholic world, and has actually produced a common type of character, at least a type marked by an apparent uniformity, has yielded in America to the urgency of the national ideal of

individuality. Where enterprise and initiative count for so much in all fields of action, it is not likely that they could for long be excluded from the field of religious feeling and its expression....Americanism is a religion of humanity grafted on Christianity. The American religion has always as its aim the well-being of the race. It is the poetry of citizenship' (Lesley Lilley, *Modernism*, London 1908, p. 106 seq.)

“These extreme effects of the dynamic forces they had set in motion undoubtedly had not been anticipated by the exponents of Americanism. Their original aims of appeasement of secularist modern society, although quite definitely in line, as to methods, with similar endeavors of French 'minimizers,' from Bossuet to Lacordaire, were of a scope less ambitious than the opinions and intentions of their prototypes. They were less concerned with philosophical abstractions and distinctions than with considerations of actualities and expediencies which, in their opinion, formed the real problems of the Church in America. They saw the Church misjudged as a foreign institution and exposed to even greater distrust because of the vast throngs of Catholic immigrants who, instead of immediately being assimilated and absorbed by American uniformity, retained their mother tongue and many of their national traditions.

“This, in the opinion of those who urged the speedy Americanization of Catholics, was a serious mistake and became a menace when these immigrants, particularly the strong German element, insisted on their natural rights in church and school, organized Catholic societies and a vigorous press and began to exercise considerable influence on the shaping of public life, disagreeing in important questions with the views of leading Catholic spokesmen including members of the Hierarchy.

“From these opposite views and trends stemmed the controversies and conflicts which have been treated in preceding articles of this series. There were heated debates, partly simultaneous partly following one another, in regard to the nationality and language question – St. Louis Memorial (1884), Milwaukee Memorial (1886), 'Cahenslyism' (1891-92), defamation of the German Priests' Society and the German-American Catholic congresses, etc. This cycle of quarrels included some features of the struggle for the parochial school and freedom of education, which culminated in the successful opposition to the Faribault Plan; but the dissensions, at the outset in large measure emanating from practical considerations in regard to the 'Americanization' of the immigrants, in the course of time not only increased in intensity but also extended into the field of fundamental principles of moral philosophy and theology. The issues eventually concerned such important questions as the rights of parents and the Church in education, the functions of the State, and the complex of innovations of thought and action, which Leo XIII called 'hostile to Catholic doctrine and discipline.' The methods and theories of Bossuet, Montalembert, Lacordaire and other French thinkers whose influence on American developments can easily be traced, were gradually replaced by indigenous ideas propagated by men who left an indelible imprint on American Catholic

life, men undoubtedly animated by high ideals. It was a tempestuous period the effects of which cannot be fully gauged even at the present time.

* * *

“In retrospect it may be said that the controversies up to the beginning of the Nineties had been mere skirmishes of Americanism and that the school fight initiated the second phase of its history.

“The endeavors to accelerate the unification of the language and particularly of the national sentiment of Catholic immigrants were justified in a measure – provided they proceeded from the premise of the inviolability of natural rights and an equitable adjustment of the mutual obligations of the different nationalities. These demands of justice unfortunately were not always respected. In going over the records of the past, one is sometimes shocked by actions and public pronouncements of leaders of Americanism who seemed to be concerned with the prestige of the Church and the reaction of non-Catholics more than with the religious welfare of the fold. They at times seemed to be oblivious to the fact that the Church has at all times been a scandal to the world to the end of times. A secularist world, a neo-pagan Society will never be satisfied with concessions which do not alter the very essence of the Church. The world applauded speeches praising the national spirit of the Church, graciously accepted compliments paid to material and political progress, and was highly pleased with paeans glorifying the Public school and secular culture and modern tolerance as interpreted by Liberalism and Secularism. But all this does not spell reconciliation between Society and the Church, between the world and the City of God. The idea of the reconciliation of the two, which, in one form or another, has been propagated through the ages, has always been fraught with disappointment and tragedy and entailed severe damage, if not for the Church herself, for many of her members.

“The history of Americanism in this regard presents no different picture. It goes without saying, of course, that there are no figures available to show the ill effects produced when Americanism, in the midst of glorious developments, disturbed and confused the Catholic people with disintegrating slogans and doctrines and, moreover, by its attitude fortified Liberalism and Secularism. This holds particularly true of the second phase of its history when the ideas and theories propagated more or less incoherently and for a number of years practiced in many respects, gradually coalesced into an ideology. Its formal inauguration took place at the Chicago Parliament of Religions in which the coveted reconciliation between the Church and Modern Society seemed to have achieved its first sensational triumph. – It was a great illusion.

* * *

“The World's Fair in Chicago, commemorating the four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America by Columbus, was opened on October 21, 1892. Cardinal Gibbons said the opening prayer and Archbishop Ireland delivered the main address.

“The official invitation to the two prelates by the management was followed by the announcement that the plans of the Fair provided for an exposition not only of material achievements but also of ideas of all great manifestations of intellectual and religious endeavor. For that reason, the Fair included a number of auxiliary congresses for education and science, and one for religious ideas. A Presbyterian, the Rev. John Henry Barrows of Chicago, was appointed chairman of the religious congress, and among the members of his committee, consisting of representatives of religious organizations of every description, were also two Catholic Bishops.

“Pope Leo had manifested great interest in the Fair. It was at the time Archbishop Satolli came to the United States, in the first place as the representative of the Pope at the World's Fair and the custodian of maps and records in possession of the Vatican relating to the discovery of America, which, at the request of Secretary of State Foster, had been loaned to the Government. The Secretary had said in a letter addressed to Cardinal Rampolla through Cardinal Gibbons: 'The intimate association of the Holy See with the Columbian enterprise and its results has so linked the memory of Rome and her Pontiffs with the vast achievement of Columbus and his competitors in the work of discovery and colonization, that an exhibit such as by the President's direction I have the honor to suggest could not fail to be among the most noteworthy contributions to this international celebration. By cooperating to this end, His Holiness will manifest for our country a regard which will be highly appreciated, not only by the managers of the exposition, but by the American people' (Will, *Life of Cardinal Gibbons*, p. 214).

“Pope Leo willingly granted the request and in addition, in July 1892, issued a letter to the Archbishops of Spain, Italy and two Americas, in which he set forth that the voyages of the Genoese were prompted by zeal for the extension of the Catholic faith. He argued that Columbus discovered America at a time when a great tempest (the Reformation) was about to be unchained against the Church, and that it seemed he was designed by Providence to compensate Catholicism for the injury it was destined to suffer in Europe. The Holy Father ordered that on October 12, or the following Sunday, the Mass of the Holy Trinity be celebrated in the Cathedrals.

“The American Bishops gladly complied with the wish of the Holy Father and in a number of cities great Catholic demonstrations were held. But the Bishops hesitated when, in fall, they were invited by Rev. Barrows' committee to participate in the Parliament of Religions. When the project was considered at the meeting of the Archbishops in New York [which FTM mentioned in last week's column, with reference to a *New York Times* report on the Archbishops' meeting – though there was no mention in the *NYT* report on

the coming Parliament, *FTM*], objections were made because the majority of the prelates wished to avoid what some people might regard as a compromise with indifferentism. It was only after an eloquent plea by Cardinal Gibbons that the invitation was accepted – according to some sources, only by part of those present.

“Meanwhile, many acceptances were received in Chicago – from W. Gladstone, the Indologist Max Mueller, Dr. Adler, Great Rabbi of the British Empire, Emmer Ali of India, the apostate Hyacinthe Loyson, etc. But there were also those who believed that the proposed Parliament would be but another Tower of Babel, and refused participation. The Anglicans, under the inspiration of Archbishop Benson of Canterbury, declined, as did the Holy Synod, and others. The Presbyterian assembly vigorously denounced the plan, and even Chairman Barrows' congregation refused to cooperate.

“The program was drafted by Bishop Keane, rector of the Catholic University, with the assistance of Prof. Dr. Bouquillon, author of *Education – To Whom Does It Belong?*”

* * *

A Timely Reminder: It is hardly a secret that the U.S. bishops, taken as a whole, have not been enthusiastic supporters of *The Wanderer*, and there is a reason for this: More than any other newspaper in the world in the late 19th century, even before Pope Leo XIII condemned “Americanism,” *Der Wanderer* was exposing its errors and exhorting the Holy See to condemn it.

It was during the red-hot debates over *Testem benevolentiae* in the United States that 22-year-old Joseph Matt took the helm of *Der Wanderer*, from Dr. Hugo Klapproth, on June 14, 1899, and introduced himself with the following lines:

“When we come before the readers of *Der Wanderer* today for the first time and when they scrutinize us with a critical eye and ask us about our program, it doesn't take us long to respond: our earnest and zealous goal will be to walk in the footsteps of our mentor and predecessor. Whatever might come about in the future, the measure by which we shall judge ourselves will be: With God and for God!...”

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In Part XXX of “A Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota,” published May 10, 1951, former *Wanderer* editor Joseph Matt continued his explanation of “Americanism” with a look back at the first Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago, in 1893.

* * *

“September 11, 1893, witnessed the grand opening of the Parliament of Religions – that strange demonstration of 'broadminded' tolerance held in connection with the Chicago World's Fair. It was, in the words of Abbe Maignen, 'the most striking manifestation of the *Americanist* school in those latter years' (*Le Pere Hecker*, Eng. ed., p. 230).

“The galleries of the Exposition amphitheater were decorated with the flags of all nations. Four thousand persons of all classes and denominations filled the great amphitheater and halls adjoining it when the representatives of the participating religions, amid thunderous plaudits of welcome, passed in procession down the central aisle to the spacious platform. 'A marvelous specter it was' – Bishop Keane told the Scientific Congress of Brussels in the following year (1894) – 'that grouping of all races and tongues, that variety of national costumes and religious insignia, with the purple robe and the gentle figure of our beloved Cardinal (Gibbons) for centre piece.' To the right and left of him sat in their picturesque costumes Brahmanas and Buddhists from India, Mandarins from China, Bonzes from Japan, Methodists from Africa, Orthodox popes from Eastern Europe and the Balkans, etc. Among the Catholic representatives, besides the Cardinal, were Archbishop Ireland, Dr. Thomas O'Gorman of the Catholic University (later Bishop of Sioux Falls), Bishop Keane of the Catholic University who, together with Dr. Bouquillon, had drafted the program.

“The session was opened with the singing of a psalm whereupon His Eminence, at the president's request, advanced to recite the Our Father. The Protestant Bonet-Maury commented in his report on the Parliament: 'What an unheard-of event in the annals of the Catholic Church – an Archbishop vested in the Roman purple rises in a meeting of heretics, schismatics and pagans to recite the Our Father. Far behind us is the time when O'Connell said: “The Catholic Church prays for all men but does not pray with any other Church”!' (*Le Congres des Religions*, Paris 1895, p. 9.) – Gisler, *Der Modernismus*, p. 79). The committee on arrangements, by the way, had the bad taste to substitute, in the official two-volume souvenir of the Congress, the Protestant version of the Our Father. 'Why is that the organizers of the Parliament of Religions...did not respect, were it only for the sake of historical truth, the version used by Cardinal Gibbons? How is it that the prelates who took part in the Congress, with Msgr. Keane who was a member of the organizing committee, did not protest against this substitution...?' (Maignen, p. 232).

“Subjectively, the author of *The Ambassador of Christ, Faith of Our Fathers*, etc., had no intention to acknowledge religious indifferentism. He made this clear in his first address to the Parliament of Religions. 'If I were to consult the interest of my health,' he said, 'I should be in bed: but as I was anxious to say a word in response to the kind of speeches that have been offered, I cannot fail to present myself, at least, to show my interest in this great undertaking. I would be wanting in my duty as a minister of the Catholic Church if I did not say it is our desire to present the claims of the Church to the observation, and, if possible, to the acceptance of every right-minded man who will

listen to us; but we appeal only to the tribunal of conscience and of intellect. I feel that in possessing the faith, I possess treasures in my coffers. I would like to share them with others; especially, as I am none the poorer in making others rich. But, though we do not agree in matters of faith, there is one platform on which we all stand united: it is the platform of charity, of humanity, of benevolence....'

“One hundred and sixty-eight delegates attended the Parliament of Religions and 182 addresses were delivered. Catholics were represented by eighteen delegates and twenty addresses. Protestants by 100 delegates and 102 addresses. The picturesque contrasts of the Congress were illustrated, among similar incidents, by the fact that the speech by Cardinal Gibbons was 'closely followed by that of Ameer Ali, a Musulman of Calcutta' (Will, *Life of Cardinal Gibbons*, p. 269).

“The Parliament of Religions closed with a grand finale on the evening of September 27. Between 7000 and 8000 persons filling Columbus and Washington halls attended. A chorus of 500 rendered Handel's Twenty-fourth Psalm, followed by a two-minute silent prayer and meditation. Then the entire audience sang Newman's *Lead, Kindly Light*. After speeches by delegates, the Allelulia from Handel's *Messiah* was sung. The three last addresses were given by the Presbyterian Barrow, the Rabbi Hirsch, and Bishop Keane, who also spoke the Benediction. Barrow said, *inter alia*:

“You men from Asia and Europe, your presence has afforded us joy and inspiration. We learned that truth is great and that God's Providence has left open more than one path on which men may rise from darkness to light...The great wall of the City of God is breached by twelve portals and if we ever shall pass through them, we shall be surprised to find many whom we had not expected to meet there...Henceforth, the religions of the earth will wage war, not among themselves, but against the giant evils oppressing mankind.' (Bonet-Maury, *Le Congres des Religions*, etc., Paris, 1895, p. 33; Gisler, *Der Modernismus*, p. 82).

“Thus ended the Parliament of Religions.

* * *

“The idea of a Congress of Religions, says Bishop Gisler, was not new. The Romans may have had something of this kind in mind when they built the Pantheon, of Alexander Severus when he erected his strange palace chapel in which statues of Apollo and Socrates stood side by side with statues of Abraham and Jesus Christ. In America itself, R.F.F. Abbot had founded the 'free religious association' of the Unitarians to which also belonged Ralph Waldo Emerson and Major Thomas W. Higginson who, in a brochure, recommended a universal religion with but two articles: Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of men. The Society for Ethical Culture and the Theistic church, to

which belongs anyone who venerates God and performs good deeds, are also products of American soil. All these and similar movements were forerunners of the Chicago Parliament of Religions which was to surpass all preceding attempts to arrive at mutual understanding. (Gisler, *Der Modernismus*, p. 83.; Fr. Albert Weiss, O. Pr., *Die Religiöse Gefahr*, 1904, p. 183 seq.)

“Some hailed the Parliament of Religions as the Pentecost of a new brotherhood, others saw in it nothing but the vain attempt of a religious merger on the basis of a vague morality and sentimentalism. Others extolled it as an ecumenical council of the historic religions for the purpose of establishing conformity of religious and moral principles in the struggle against the common enemy. Bonet-Maury, the enthusiastic eulogist of the Parliament, asserted that the Parliament of Religions had been the most significant and most momentous event since the declaration of human rights by the French Revolution in 1789. The Indologist Prof. Dr. Max Mueller at Oxford expressed the opinion that religion throughout the world had been benefited. Had he known the real intentions of the organizers of the Parliament, he wrote, he surely should have wished to attend; because it was he in the first place who as the editor of the many volumes of *The Sacred Books of the East* had prepared the way for the Congress.

“However, wrote Bishop Gisler, if, instead of losing ourselves with some of these panegyrics in the clouds of exaggeration, we prefer to speak of the actual effects of the Congress, we might register that under its spell Mrs. Caroline Haskell donated to the University of Chicago \$25,000 for a chair of comparative religion and \$125,000 for an Oriental museum, and also endowed a 'John Henry Barrow' chair at Calcutta or another Eastern center where scholars from Europe, Asia or Africa would in annual lecture courses demonstrate the interrelations of Christianity and the other religions.

“For America, in particular was claimed, as one of the results of the Chicago experiment, definite progress of tolerance and brotherhood – in spite of the fact that at the same time the American Protective Association (A.P.A.) was causing disagreeable disturbances. A remarkable inconsistency was manifest in the attitude of some of the most ardent Americanist promoters of the Parliament of Religions. While very eager to demonstrate their friendliness and broadmindedness not only towards Protestantism but so towards Liberalism, Secularism, Freemasonry, etc., they had little patience with coreligionists who, somehow, had incurred their displeasure or dared to reject and oppose their innovations.

“But we probably have to judge such phenomena leniently as symptoms of the growing pains of a new era still in its infancy. There was at that time much blind enthusiasm and vague theorizing. Reading faded newspaper clippings of the latter part of the Nineties, and exuberant speeches and books devoted to progress, humanity, tolerance and the other idols of Americanism and to the glorious future under the reign of the new

dispensation – one cannot escape the temptation to compare, with grim amusement, the ebullient hopes of the past with the antithetical realities of the present time – the optimistic forecasts of religious peace and harmonious cooperation with the disruptive agitations of the Blanshards, Oxnams and the big organizations and small coterie denying to Catholics fundamental rights.

“Sober statements of facts, however, are not popular – no more today than they were sixty years ago. 'Why rant about so-called mistakes of the past,' a reader objects, 'don't you think a Parliament of Religions could do a whole lot of good today?' This critical reader unfortunately voices the opinion of not a few Catholics. There is marked similarity between the slogans rampant at the time of the Chicago Parliament of Religions and the ideas of some progressivists and activists in our ranks today. We are not quite ready to revert to the old panaceas for the reconciliation of Church and modern Society and most of us reject them in theory. But the tendencies and practices from which stemmed a system of doctrines which was held by Leo XIII to be of sufficient importance to necessitate a formal repudiation are with us today.

“Their roots, like those of couch grass and other perennial weeds are infesting the fertile soil of Catholic thought and action and the luxuriant growth of their shoots is creating a multiplicity of Catholic actions and confusing and stifling Catholic Action. There is, of course, much good will to serve the Catholic cause by allaying and preventing friction and strife, but the range of differences is much greater and the problems are much more complicated than at the time of the Parliament of Religions a half-century ago; and no one is able to foretell the problems that may arise from the impatient attempts to bring about and accelerate the desired change of the world.

* * *

“The reform theologian A. Sabatier clearly expressed the hopes and aspirations extreme progressivists and activists had in mind when they spoke of the new springtime of religion which they triumphantly announced to have been inaugurated by the Parliament of Religions. He wrote: 'Once the members of the different religions have become aware that their cults are merely of a symbolic character and of relative inconsequence, they have thereby discovered their most fundamental and inherent kinship. All religions will then present themselves as different dialects of one and the same universal language and one may be translated into the other without difficulty; (Bonet-Maury, p. 325; Gisler, p. 84).

“That is an unmistakable profession of dogmatic indifferentism and reflects thoughts plainly expressed in some of the addresses of the Chicago Congress; the Chinese Wall of the different creeds must fall; Christ must resurrect from the tomb and be freed from the shrouds and bonds of religious liturgies; a new universal religion must be established.

Major Higginson said in his Chicago address on the 'Sympathies of Religion':

“The Protestant churches, as well as the Church of Rome, are too narrow; we suffocate in their temples; we must have something more catholic than this Catholicism – not the Church of Rome but the Church of God and man; what we need is the true “*Semper, ubique ab omnibus,*” the religion of the centuries, the truly Catholic religion.’

“He told of his experience when, on the eve of Easter, he attended the Resurrection services at a cathedral in Portugal. In the dark church, only lighted by three mystical tapers, the faithful mourned and atoned while processions paraded through the aisles like spectres and eerily illumed pictures of death and hell emerged from time to time from the darkness. Suddenly the *Gloria* was intoned, the organ roared, the bells rang from the spires, the shades were pulled back from the windows, and bright sunlight filled the church. Flowers were showered from the galleries, the faithful bowed to one another and sang songs of joy. 'And I said to myself that nothing was more necessary but to admit the sunlight to bring about the change from gloom to gladness. But these priests and their assistants only expelled the darkness which they themselves had produced. Well, then, roll up the shades which exclude the light. But remove also the walls which darken our temples. The temple itself is nothing but the lingering shadow of the divine light (!). Instead of stifling incense, let us have the pure air of the good Lord, and teach us that the broadest religion is the one that has the greatest vitality...'

“The Catholics taking part in the Chicago Congress surely had no intention of indorsing or praising dogmatic indifference or praising dogmatic indifferentism or religious evolutionism. However, Bishop Keane, in Chicago and later in Brussels, indulged in phrases which – as Bishop Gisler writes –may not justify but surely explain the suspicion of leanings to indifferentism. His progressive slogans, 'to let down the drawbridges,' 'to throw down the barriers of the Church,' 'to widen the doors,' etc., reflected the trends of Americanism and the anxiety that Catholics might miss the boat of 'progress' and expose themselves to the reproach of being backward, narrow, reactionary, perfectionists, isolationists, ghettoists, etc., etc.

“There are many today who have the same aversion against being 'different' and the same hankering for the plaudits of the world – the world of Liberalism, Secularism and Neo-Paganism.”

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In Part XXXI of his “Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota,” published in *The Wanderer* on May 17, 1951, Joseph Matt continued his explanation of Americanism as the root of Modernism, and its relationship with the World Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago on September 11, 1893.

* * *

“The confusion surrounding the world debut of Americanism toward the end of the nineteenth century is illustrated by the fact that to this day the one-sided and unjustified assertion persists that Pope Leo XIII in January 1899, had condemned ideas which Europeans had wrongly imputed to Catholic intellectual leaders in America.

“The French translators of the speeches and writings of the exponents of Americanism are usually pointed out as false witnesses while the real culprit stands indicted as as Abbe Charles Maignen who, particularly by his devastating analysis of Abbe Felix Klein's French edition of Father Walter Elliott's biography of Father Hecker revealed the dangerous innovations propagated in the United States.

“Assertions to the effect that Abbe Klein and his associates were unqualified as interpreters of Americanism and that their testimony therefore had to be discounted could impress only the uninitiated. For these men had for a number of years been closely allied with Americanism and its spokesmen and, in full accord with them, had acted as the European heralds and pioneers of the Americanist ideas. It was less difficult to disavow the testimony of Abbe Maignen. He was comparatively unknown and the defenders of Americanism tried to impugn the validity of his judgment by referring to him as the man who had been censured for his 'vile (?) attack on Count de Mun,' whose book had been refused the Imprimatur by the Archbishop of Paris, etc. Msgr. O'Reilly and others attempted to disqualify him by the convenient method of calling him a docile tool of 'Cahenslyists' – an 'argument' which for some people in those turbulent days was final. In order to be convincing, however, Abbe Maignen's foes had to suppress the fact that the Magister of the Sacred Palace in Rome, P. Albertus Lepidi, O. Pr., had given the Imprimatur by virtue of the ancient privilege going back to Albertus Magnus, and that so eminent a man as Cardinal Satolli, the former Apostolic Delegate in Washington, had highly recommended Abbe Maignen's book. 'Your Reverence,' he had written to the author, 'may rest assured of having done a work exceedingly useful and commendable. Whoever may be touched by its contents, instead of being offended, should rather acknowledge that unconsciously he has erred, and duly regretting it, profit by the information received....'

“In the spirit of this admonition the most prominent exponents of Americanism acted when after the publication of Pope Leo's brief, *Testem benevolentiae*, they proclaimed their unqualified rejection of the condemned ideas and practices. Rome had spoken and the quarrel thereby – should have been ended. The condemnation was as clear and unequivocal as, judged objectively, the errors had been. It was unfortunate, however that an army of irresponsible writers in the Catholic press and particularly in the secular press refused to admit that errors had been propagated, obscured the issues with ill-

advised apologetics and ill-tempered polemics, and thus partly frustrated the salutary effects of the Papal decision.

“The question of Americanism, as has been emphasized repeatedly in these articles, involved a very important development in the intellectual life of our times – a manifestation of far-reaching effects not only on Catholicism in our own country but also on Modernistic trends in Europe. While its relations to similar movements in the past and to subsequent developments are, perhaps, only of historical interest, an examination of the influence of the ideas of Americanism on the present time, groping for solutions of ramified and confusing problems, is a task of vital importance. *Testem benevolentiae*, because its significance for America was minimized and so much of it was so disrespectfully twisted (sifted,' Allen S. Will subtly called it in his *Life of Cardinal Gibbons*, p. 261), did not really terminate the era of our Church history dominated, or at least strongly influenced, by Americanism. The condemned ideas and trends, while temporarily checked, were not eradicated, and continued to grow and spread.

“It would be presumptuous on my part to venture an opinion on the correctness of a statement made some time ago in private conversation by one of our most scholarly Archbishops, to the effect that we are witnessing today the practical application of the ideas of Americanism. However, even a layman if he knows history and logic cannot blink the fact that discussions of present-day problems and tasks often present views and arguments amazingly in conformity with talks and writings of the time of the Chicago Parliament of Religions and frequently even with manifestations of extreme progressivist torchbearers of Americanism in France. There is an unending repetition, with few variations, of the familiar old phrases extolling activism in contrast to the alleged pacifism of the 'steerage period,' 'broadminded' tolerance and fraternization and cooperation with any conglomeration of groups and organizations and institutions; tabooing 'narrow' distinctions as far as Liberalism, Secularism, Freemasonry, etc., are concerned; ridiculing and unctuously, or wrathfully, rejecting religious 'isolationism,' 'ghetto' and 'Catacomb Catholicism' and similar 'antiquated' notions. To participate in everything, to be on the bandwagon, to be active and progressive, to take the lead, to impress, but in all things and at all times respectfully bow to so-called public opinion and the forces behind it – that, according to the practical exploiters and appliers of the ideas of Americanism, is the great mission of the Church.

* * *

“It stands to reason that every age has its particular tasks to which Catholics of any given generation must apply themselves with special devotion. But it would be well for us, wrapped up completely in the activities of the immediate present, not to lose sight of the lessons of the past. What, for instance, in spite of its unusual leadership, did

Americanism actually achieve in transforming its non-Catholic, non-Christian, secularistic, neo-pagan surrounding? Does the Church of today owe its exalted position to the external glamorous successes of the period – or to the contemporaneous endeavors of the quiet, humble and patient workers – priests and laymen – in the vineyard of the Lord? There are many modest parishes in the country that have contributed to the building of the City of God in the New World more than the entire Parliament of Religions and other sensational manifestations publicized as marvelous achievements; parishes whose pastors, unknown to the world, by their simple sermons and their personal example of self-sacrifice and devotion, created more lasting values than the speakers at the Parliament of Religions with all their astounding eloquence. The words of those modest priests are bearing fruit in the second and third generation of their parishes, with the sonorous addresses received by the thousands at the Parliament of Religions with thunderous applause are being repudiated today, as if by mocking echo, by the gospel of the ancient hatred coming from the mouths of the Oxnam, Blanshards, and their ilk.

* * *

At the international congress of Catholic Scientists held in Brussels in September 1894, Msgr. [Bishop] Keane, who had played a leading role at the Parliament of Religions, stated: America had given the world an important lesson by amalgamating into one grand unity the different nationalities and traditions imported from Europe, and 'there was the same lesson to be given on religious grounds...Humanity is beyond question striving for gentler manners and a greater extension of charity. But is it not the aim of religion to unite man with God and his fellowmen? Religion is charity. Even though we could not agree on creeds, was it not possible to be in accord about charity?' (Maignen, English ed., p. 229).

“Bishop Gisler commented as follows: 'Even stranger than this entirely incomplete, and insofar wrong, definition of religion was the other which Keane gave in his closing address on “The Ultimate Religion” at the Chicago Parliament. “We have heard [at the Parliament], repeated and diversified, yet concordant, the definition of what religion really is. Viewed in all its aspects, we have seen how true is the old definition that religion means the union of man with God. This, we have seen, is the great goal towards which all aim, whether walking in fulness of light or groping in the dimness of twilight. And, therefore, we have seen how true it is that religion is a reality back of all religions. Religions are orderly or disorderly systems for the attainment of that great goal, the union of man with God”...Oratorically a masterpiece and from the religious point of view extremely tolerant, the address was received with thunderous applause' (Maignen, p. 341; Gisler, p. 86).

“Abbe Maignen has an interesting comment on this applause. Msgr. Keane, in his report

to the scientific congress at Brussels stated: 'If you had heard the applause of those five thousand men, if you had seen them throw themselves on me to thank me, you would have understood that the Christian religion was there, like the great preacher St. Paul, to tell the whole truth, and that face to face with truth the human intelligence is seized and conquered provided that truth reaches and softens the heart.' Bishop Gisler makes the indulgent concession: 'Considering his strange and difficult audience one may be inclined to find the comparison with St. Paul before the Areopagus not entirely out of place and accord to his statement a lenient interpretation' (l.c. p. 87). Abbe Maignen holds a different position. He writes:

“It would never have occurred to us to establish a parallel between St. Paul, who was a trifle more than a “great preacher,” and the former rector of the Catholic University. But since Msgr. Keane invites us to make the comparison between the address delivered at the Parliament of Religions and St. Paul's discourse before the Areopagus we cannot help noting some difference, at least as regards the results. In the one case we see five thousand men “throw themselves” on an orator to thank him; in the other we see an audience, probably much smaller, receive the Apostle of the Gentiles with derision, put off the examination of his teaching to another day, and send Paul away without having understood him, and followed only by the few who were won by divine grace. The Acts of the Apostles have taken care to explain for us the reason of this oratorical failure. St. Paul had spoken of the resurrection of the dead before the rationalists of Athens, nor do we find that he afterwards adopted another method. Msgr. Keane did not try the experiment; he was, doubtless, assured that had he preached the fact of the risen Christ before those five thousand men, they would not have “thrown themselves on him” to thank and applaud him. “I have been told,” Msgr. Keane continued in his report, “...that there were tears in the eyes of nearly all.” Nothing of the kind was observed in Athens. But Msgr. Keane holds to this comparison – he can see no greater religious event since apostolic times than the Chicago Congress, and he does not even hesitate to show us in his own person the confusion of the Babel repaired' (Maignen, English ed., p. 236).

“In the last sentence, Abbe Maignen refers to the following exuberances in Msgr. Keane's Chicago address: 'These days will always be to us a memory of sweetness. Sweet, indeed it has been for God's long separated children to meet at last, for those whom the haps and mishaps of human life have put so far apart and whom the foolishness of the human heart has so often arrayed in hostility, here to clasp hands in friendship and in brotherhood, in the presence of the blessed and loving Father of us all...Sweet to tie again bonds of affection broken since the days of Babel,, and to taste “how good and sweet a thing it is for brethren to live in unity”...These days have been days of instruction, too. They have given us object-lessons in old truths, which have grown clearer because thus rendered concrete and living before us. In the first place, while listening to utterances which we could not but approve and applaud, though coming from sources so divers, we have had practical, experimental evidence of the old

saying that there is truth in all religions...'

* * *

“Msgr. Keane and other American prelates, says Bishop Gisler, completely misjudged the religious effects of the Chicago Parliament. The unfortunate Abbe Charbonnel (who later apostatized) reported in the *Revue de Paris* (Sept. 1, 1895) that Cardinal Gibbons had told him: 'The Congress of Chicago is the fairest and happiest event in the history of our young American Church.' Msgr. Keane was laboring under a slight delusion when he said that 'this Parliament dealt a mighty blow to atheism, deism, agnosticism, and mere humanism.' The *Journal des Debats* (April, 1898) came closer to the truth when it described the impression made on the lukewarm and skeptical public in these caustic words: '...Jehova, Mohamet. Jesus, Buddha, and several gods sent delegates to the Congress. The faithful of all known cults there made their profession of faith and said their prayer, and then went off separately to their own churches and chapels and altars. Those who witnessed the spectacle, on the spot or from a distance, drew the most diverse conclusions. Some said: “Truly, all religions are good”; others “Evidently, all religions are false,” and the rest did not know what to think about the affair” (Gisler, p. 87; Maignen, pp. 228, 342)....”

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Due to the length of this Part XXXI, it will be continued next week, and so we continue with Part XXXII.

A note to readers: In Part XXXII, Joseph Matt continued his observations on Americanism and the World Parliament of Religions. In Parts XXXIII through XXXVI, Joseph Matt comments extensively on the early life of the founder of the Paulists, Father Isaac Hecker, whose cause for canonization was formally opened by former New York Archbishop, Edward Cardinal Egan, in January 2005.

Father Hecker, of course, was “the Prophet of Americanism.” Since these four articles are essentially biographical, and do not touch on Hecker's work in the United States after his ordination by Cardinal Wiseman in England in 1849, FTM deems it appropriate – barring any objections by readers – to conclude Matt's work with Part XXXII.

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This week, we continue with Part XXXI of Joseph Matt's “Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota,” on “Americanism: Parliament of Religions,” which will be followed by the beginning of Part XXXII, “Americanism & Modernism,” which will be concluded next week.

After recording Bishop John Keane's enthusiasm for the Congress, Matt continued:

“The fact is that this amalgamation of religions, this interconfessionalism, organized by churches and sects, confused many and embarrassed and scandalized devout Catholics. The Church, which professed to be the one true Church cannot put itself on the same level with all kinds of religions to the extent that the Congress rules and regulations recognize this equality at least for the seventeen convention days, guaranteeing at the same time that the essential teachings of the Church would be kept under cover while the Cross of Christ could be assailed without parliamentary restrictions or interference on the part of the chairman. Moreover, the Catholic participants were apparently were unaware of the secret undercurrent of the Congress. According to the intentions of the non-Catholics, the goal was the propagation of dogmatic indifferentism, particularly religious evolutionism, and Catholics, willy-nilly, contributed toward that trend by their cooperation, although with good intentions, in the staging of this world-wide propaganda. (Gisler, p. 87).

* * *

“That was – to use a phrase coined many years later in another connection – 'the noble experiment' of Chicago. Of course, it was evaluated differently by progressivists and activists who boast of understanding incomparably better than 'Ghetto and Catacomb Catholics the problems and needs of our times. When [Abbe Victor] Charbonnel, in 1895, tried to organize a Parliament of Religions in Paris, he published a manifesto which was attuned to the same eager activism we find advertised on all sides today in almost identical phraseology. Charbonnel, at that time still Abbe Charbonnel, one of the outstanding heralds of Americanism in France, wrote in the *Revue de Paris* (September, 1895):

“The first result that might be expected from a Congress of Religions would be the restoration of the religious ideal. Why is that the intellectual and social movement of our time is being accomplished outside the Church? It is because, as Archbishop Ireland has expressed it, “the ambassadors of Christ have withdrawn into their winter quarters in the churches and sacristies.” It seemed as if religion had nothing to say to the world and as if, admitting its weakness, it were shirking the test of contradiction. But if it arises someday from its sleep and its catacombs, if it appears before the masses and offers them its teaching, without the unpopular apparatus of an authority seeking to domineer, it would be surprising if souls could remain hostile to its teaching when they have so many needs and troubles that are crying out for divine assistance.’

“Charbonnel's plans failed. He bitterly complained of the disinterestedness of the parochial clergy 'devoutly wrapped up in a blind and silent mysticism,' but pinned his

hopes on 'the intellectual clergy, the clergy interested in social teachings and social efforts,' who 'showed a better understanding of the proposed innovation..' He did succeed in gathering quite a number of them, but warned by Abbe Peries who had been a member of the original staff of the Catholic University [of America], Cardinal Richard, Archbishop of Paris, suppressed the agitation for another edition of the Parliament of Religions. And shortly thereafter, the Holy Father formally expressed his disapproval of congresses patterned after the Chicago Parliament of Religions. In a letter, of September 15th, 1895, addressed to Archbishop (later Cardinal) Satolli, the Apostolic Delegate in Washington, Pope Leo XIII wrote:

“We have learned that in the United States of America assemblies are held in which Catholics unite indiscriminately with those who are separated from the Church in order to treat of religious and moral questions. We willingly recognize the interest in religious matters which continues more and more to animate that nation. But, although these mixed gatherings have been hitherto tolerated in prudent silence, it would seem to us better that Catholics should hold their congresses by themselves; at the same time, that the advantages accruing from them may not redound solely to their own profit, they may so order these congresses that even those separated from the Catholic Church may be admitted as auditors....”

Thus ends Part XXXI.

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A little historical note on Fr. Victor Charbonnel. Charbonnel, who first proposed the Parliament of Religions several years before the first congress in Chicago, was deeply involved in the Theosophical movement in Paris, and was an intimate of the Duchess of Pomar, a successor of Madame Helen Blavatsky as leader of the Theosophical Society in France. Charbonnel eventually left the Church to join the Freemasons.

According to *Theosophy: History of a Pseudo-Religion*, by René Guénon, Alvin Moore, Jr., Cecil Bethell (Paris, 1965; first English edition, 2003), two days of the Chicago Parliament of Religions was devoted to Theosophy and New Age spirituality.

* * *

Part XXXII of Joseph Matt's “Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota: Americanism & Modernism”:

“The Parliament of Religions, as Msgr. Keane and other leaders announced before and at the Chicago gathering, was to be Americanism's great experiment of presenting to the world the spectacle of the mutual reconciliation of the religions and the reconciliation of

the united religion of love and humanism with modern Society and modern Culture. The 'great lesson' proved to be a grandiose failure, as the history of the Parliament and the subsequent cool rejection of such experiments by the Holy See clearly demonstrated.

“Abbe Maignen, in his devastating criticism (*Le Pere Hecker*, etc., p. 3) called the Parliament of Religions Americanism's 'first campaign.' It was followed by the 'second campaign,' waged in France, when the unfortunate Abbe Charbonnel and his followers undertook the vain attempt to arrange a Parliament of Religions in connection with the Paris World Fair in 1900. The purpose of the 'third campaign' was to make the ideas of Father Isaac Hecker, founder of the Congregation of St. Paul the Apostle, the foundation of Catholic thought in conformity with modern trends.

“Those were years of intensive agitation carried on by men who played an important part in the Church as well as in the life of the Nation. A Catholic writer conscious of his responsibility will, therefore, with reluctance, enter into a discussion of their ideas and endeavors – for the purpose, not of detracting from the glory they earned for real achievements, but of clarifying historic facts and drawing lessons for our own times.

“In one of his splendid books Cardinal Gibbons speaks at considerable length of the right evaluation of historic happenings and men, expressing disapproval of blind and one-sided glorification as well as of improper harshness. 'Leo XIII,' he writes, *inter alia*, 'once remarked to Cardinal Manning: “It has been too much out of fashion in writing history to omit what is unpleasant. If the historians of the last century had written the Gospels, for example, we might never have heard of the fall of Peter or the treachery of Judas.”’ The same Pontiff in his letter on Historical Studies teaches that “the first law of history is never dare to speak falsely; its second, never to fear to declare the truth.”’

“His Eminence continues: 'Of late years, I am happy to say, we are treated to memoirs that aim at being true to life, that represent to us men of flesh and blood, as well as of spirit; – men of strong faith, virility of soul, genuine charity, magnanimity of character, and self-denial, but not exempt from some of the imperfections incident to humanity....The public man, whether churchman or layman, who has never committed an error of judgment, or who was never betrayed into any moral delinquency, will hardly ever be credited with any great words or deeds worthy of being transmitted to posterity.' The cardinal, who himself frequently stood in the cross fire of conflicting views, points to 'the inspired penmen' as 'the best models of biography.' 'They give us,' he says, 'a faithful and accurate portrait of their most sacred subjects, without any effort to hide their moral deformities or defects. David's sin, Peter's denial, Paul's persecution of the early Church, the worldly ambition of the sons of Zebedee, the incredulity of Thomas, are fearlessly recorded without any attempt at extenuation or palliation. The delinquencies of these men arouse our compassion without diminishing our reverence for them, and serve by contrast to lend additional lustre to the halo of their subsequent

lives....Who thinks less of Augustine and Jerome, because he sees them engaged in earnest theological controversy which almost snapped asunder the bonds of charity?...What names are more venerated in France than those of Bossuet and Fenelon, although they were long involved in a heated controversy? Whoever would omit these episodes on the plea of edification, would mutilate their glorious lives. He would remove the shading which presented the picture in a bolder light....(Cardinal Gibbons, *The Ambassador of Christ*, John Murphy & Co., 1896, p. 252 seq.)

“These are directives which must be applied also to any presentation of the storm-and-stress period of Americanism. Writers who sinned against the norms expounded by Cardinal Gibbons not only 'mutilated the lives' of the men engaged in the controversy in leading positions, but also frustrated an adequate clarification of the issues in accordance with the important brief *Testem benevolentiae*, and were thus instrumental in keeping alive the condemned ideas and practices.

* * *

“Bishop Dr. Anton Gisler has accomplished a meritorious deed, when in his comprehensive and profound work, *Der Modernismus* (Einsiedeln, 1912), he set forth the interrelations of the Modernistic errors in the different countries and their connections with similar trends of the past, and thus presented a synthesis of the basic errors of our days condemned in 1907. It cannot be the purpose of this series of articles (even if the author had the necessary qualifications, which is not the case) to attempt a similar theological examination. The task which I have mapped out for myself is of less ambitious scope. It merely consists in this, to prove Americanism as a link in the long chain of philosophical and theological innovations and to disprove the assertions of zealous apologists who passionately denied and involvement in Americanism in modernistic trends – instead of following the example of obedient submission set by the leading exponents of Americanism.

“This purpose has in large measure been accomplished in the preceding articles. They treated of the history of the conflicts in the Church in America, resulting basically from the idea of bringing about the reconciliation of modern Society with the Church. They pointed out the influences of intellectual and political trends in France, from Bossuet to Lacordaire and Montalembert, on leading men in the Americanist camp. And they finally illustrated, against the background of the Chicago Parliament of Religions, the practical application of the theory of the reconciliation with modern Society on the basis of rapprochement between the leading religions.

“This manifestation, which at one time was glorified as 'the greatest event' in the history of the Church in America, presented Americanism, so to speak, as having come of age and the herald of modern Catholicism rooted in American progress and American

experience.

“The ideas advocated by Americanism had existed in practice (for instance in regard to school and education) for a number of years, – since the time when Archbishop Ireland and men of similar towering personality began to exercise powerful influence on the shaping of Catholic intellectual life. At first loose slogans, they gradually acquired more definite formulations – in the earlier stages of Americanism in the form of more or less conscious adaptation of views agitated in the Catholic camp in France but, later, as deliberate paraphrases of teachings of Father Hecker which, proclaimed with increasing insistence by leading members of the hierarchy and coined into philosophical currency by some of the professors at the young Catholic University, with a few years coalesced into a system.

“The formulae, although in some instances at first blush fascinating, actually contributed nothing new. Opponents had no difficulty in pointing out that the ideas offered in modern make-up had long since been condemned by the Church as Gallicanism, Febronianism, etc. To Americanism could be applied what Hettinger wrote about the doctrines of Materialism: 'In evaluating false systems one can often say that whatever truth is contained in them is not new, and what is new in them is not true. But not even that can be claimed for Materialism – not even its errors are new.' (Hettinger, *Apologie des Christentums*, 7th ed., vol. 1, p. 173).

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Next week, we will conclude with Part XXXII, and bring to an end Joseph Matt's “Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota.”

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A final note on the Parliament of Religions, with this observation from a web site devoted to Hindu monks Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, the latter of whom made his Western debut in Chicago: “The young, unknown monk of India was transformed overnight into an outstanding figure of the religious world. From obscurity he leapt to fame. His life-size portraits were posted in the streets of Chicago, with words 'The Monk Vivekananda' written beneath them and many passers-by would stop to do reverence with bowed heads.

“Dr. J.H. Barrows, Chairman of the General Committee of the Parliament of Religions, said: 'Swami Vivekananda exercised a wonderful influence over his auditors,' and Mr. Merwin-Marie Snell stated, more enthusiastically: 'By far the most important and typical representative of Hinduism was Swami Vivekananda, who, in fact, was beyond question the most popular and influential man in the Parliament'

“Newspapers published his speeches and they were read with warm interest all over the country. The *New York Herald* said: 'He is undoubtedly the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions. After hearing him we feel how foolish it is to send missionaries to this learned nation.' The *Boston Evening Post* said: 'He is a great favorite at the Parliament from the grandeur of his sentiments and his appearance as well. If he merely crosses the platform he is applauded; and this marked approval of thousands he accepts in a childlike spirit of gratification without a trace of conceit....The four thousand fanning people in the Hall of Columbus would sit smiling and expectant, waiting for an hour or two to listen to Vivekananda for fifteen minutes. The chairman knew the old rule of keeping the best until the last.'”

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THE CONCLUSION OF JOSEPH MATT'S “CENTENARY OF CATHOLIC LIFE IN MINNESOTA”

PART XXXII

“Americanism,” wrote Matt, “applauded in the United States as the new gospel for the reconciliation of Church and modern Culture, even after its condemnation at the turn of the century, made the rounds through Europe, in France, Germany, England, Italy, etc.,. It was not Modernism in the full sense of the term but had contributed considerably to prepare the atmosphere and the way for the heresy. The Church resolutely proceeded to call a halt. On September 8, 1899, a few months after Pope Leo XIII warned the French clergy against Kant's philosophy (which had played an important part in Hecker's adolescent years). In the years between 1899 and 1906, a long list of theological works, written by priests, was put on the Index of prohibited books, among them writings by Prof. Dr. Schell of Wurzburg, Abbe Denis, Abbe Alfred Loisy (excommunicated in 1908), Abbe Houtin, Abbe Lefranc, W. Ward, Romolo Murri (excommunicated in 1909) Fogazarro's *Il Santo*. Abbe Charbonnel had apostatized soon after the failure of his Parliament of Religions project. Abbe Tyrell was dismissed from the Society of Jesus in 1906 and excommunicated in the following year.

“But the ideas of Modernism through books, newspapers and reviews, continued to confuse Catholics, even in seminaries. Its advocates 'demanded Church reforms according to the formula of Gioberti: Not against Rome, but with Rome, and even in spite of Rome. They pretended that the spouse of Christ was covered with wrinkles, Rome was to be completely changed. In a much more radical sense they repeated the words Newman, at that time still an Anglican, had spoken at a visit to the Eternal City: 'Oh Rome – that thou were not Rome!' Warning against these trends, the *Civiltà Cattolica* wrote: 'One would believe in the existence of a general secret union of the reformers, judging from the uniformity of their ideas and statements and even their

phraseology in Germany, in France, in America, in Italy. They are united by a common bond and animated by the same spirit.' (Gisler, *Der Modernismus*, p. 21).

“The saintly Pope Pius X, who will be beatified next Sunday [1951], in the public Consistory of April 7, 1907, deplored the terrible heresies threatening to undermine the foundations of the Faith and destroy Christianity. That, he said, was for him a source of anxiety more than the vicious Kulturkampf initiated by the French Government with the Separation law.

“On July 3, 1907, the Holy Office promulgated the decree *Lamentabili*, called 'The New Syllabus' or 'Syllabus of Pius X' (although preparations had already begun under Leo XIII). It complains in the introduction: Our age, to its disastrous doom, tolerates no restraint and is carried away by such frantic love of innovation that it casts aside the heritage of mankind and embraces the most serious errors.

“The Syllabus, formulating these errors, contains the proscription of sixty-five propositions, which, according to A. Vermeersch (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol, 10, p. 421) may be grouped under the following heads: Prop. 1-8, errors concerning the teaching of the Church; Prop 9-19, errors concerning the inspiration, truth and study of Holy Writ, especially the Gospels; Prop. 20-36, errors concerning revelation and dogma; Prop. 27-28, Christological errors; Prop. 39-51, errors relative to the sacraments; Prop. 52-57, errors concerning the institution and organization of the Church; Prop. 58-65, errors on doctrinal evolution.

THE MOMENTOUS ENCYCLICAL

“The momentous encyclical *Pascendi Dominici gregis*, an exhaustive commentary on the Syllabus, was published on September 8, 1907. In the introduction it laid bare the gravity of the danger, pointed out the necessity of firm and decisive action, and approved of the title 'Modernism' for the new errors. It gives us first a very methodical exposition of Modernism; next follows its general condemnation with a word as to corollaries that may be drawn from the heresy. Pope Pius then goes on to examine the causes and effects of Modernism, and finally seeks the necessary remedies. Their application he endeavors to put into practice by a series of energetic measures. An urgent appeal to the bishops fittingly closes this striking document.

“‘This powerful document,’ says Bishop Gisler, ‘is reminiscent of that Pentecost event of which it is written: “Then Peter rose with the eleven, raised his voice, and spoke. In Pius, once again Peter rose, raised his voice, and spoke to the bishops, and with the bishops to the entire flock of the faithful. When, on August 3, 1903, Pius X received the Key of Heaven at the threshold of the twentieth century, our generation was assembled in the incomparable St. Peter's plaza where Bernini's colonnades extend their arms to the

world. It listened to the historic corner window of the Vatican whence in the days of Leo XIII so many a stirring word had gone out – it wanted to hear the program of the reign of Pius X. The programmatic announcement went forth, it was a monumental sentence of the Apostle of the Gentiles and re-echoed like a trumpet blast through the length and breadth of the earth: to restore all things in Christ! The most glorious move in applying this program was the encyclical *Pascendi*' (Gisler, p. 23).

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AMERICANISM: A PRELUDE & HERALD OF MODERNISM

“Americanism, as emphasized before, was not Modernism in the strict sense. But it was, as Bishop Gisler has convincingly proved, and as may be deduced from the paternal and at the same time decisive condemnation by Leo XIII, one of the precursors and heralds of this heresy of our time.

“That, of course, surely had not been intended by the originators and spokesmen of Americanism, neither by Father Hecker, whose good intentions and unselfish apostolic activities were praised even by opponents of his ideas (for instance, Father Pfuelf, S.J., in the *Stimmen aus Maria Laach*, vol. 65), nor by Archbishop Ireland and his friends. Bishop Gisler, although an uncompromising critic of Americanism, states: 'Many other American bishops [besides Carrol, Kenrick, Hughes, Neumann, of whom he speaks at length] could be mentioned with reverence. At the present time [1912] too, we find in the American hierarchy – besides Gibbons, Ireland and Keane, known throughout the world – many an illustrious man for whom we could envy the Catholics of America' (*Der Modernismus*, p. 52).

“It was unfortunate that such men became entangled in the great errors rampant at the turn of the century. It stands to reason that serious loss accrued therefrom to constructive endeavors of the Church. This damage was undoubtedly repaired, at least in part, when those who formerly acted as the spokesmen for Americanism, immediately after the publication of *Testem benevolentiae*, disavowed the condemned errors. Probably even more damaging than the drawn-out controversy itself was the attitude of smaller minds who stubbornly adhered to the argument that Pope Leo had condemned a mere fiction which did not concern America. They failed – or refused – to understand the significance of Pope Leo's action, and, as far as they and their followers were concerned, Americanism could continue to spread its dangerous gospel as if *Testem benevolentiae* never had been written, and as if no shadows dimmed the glorious sunshine of American achievements.”

THE END

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Just as modern Catholics – *Wanderer* readers and members of Catholics United for the Faith, to take two examples – were vilified by their prelates in letters to Roman officials for misrepresenting or misunderstanding the motives of those whom they criticized, so too did the 19th century's major U.S. prelates – most notably James Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore and St. Paul's Archbishop John Ireland. Not only that, Gibbons, but especially Ireland through his many contacts with leading newspapers of the time, promoted a propaganda war against his German-American Catholic critics, accusing them of anti-Americanism, a lack of patriotism, and of attempting to subvert American democracy by their loyalty to the Holy See and their strong assertion of their rights as Catholics in the Church.

It must be emphasized here that, at the heart of the issue – for which Gibbons and Ireland received the praise of the *New York Times* and other liberal newspapers – was their support for public schools in opposition to German-American Catholics who insisted upon having their own parochial schools – and State aid to support them as well!

The root of the German-American Catholics' opposition to the “Americanism” of Gibbons and Ireland was their experience of the bureaucratization of public life in Germany and the surrounding Protestant countries of Europe at the time of Bismarck, and their suspicion that the U.S. State was increasingly expanding its powers and usurping the rights and freedoms of local municipalities. What disturbed Joseph Matt so much was that the pro-Government policies supported by Gibbons and Ireland, in opposition to the German-American Catholics, were harming parishes, making their social programs redundant, which would lead, ultimately, to the redundancy of the Catholic parish itself.

THE BRAMBLE-BUSH OF BUREAUCRACY

Regarding this, Matt wrote, in 1951:

“...We American Catholics of today probably would find ourselves in a much more favorable position to make our influence felt, if those modest beginnings of unified Catholic action would have been carefully fostered and consistently developed. If that important spadework performed by pioneer parishes and societies would not have been neglected we probably would be less helpless and beset by problems at a time when self-help and other manifestations of a sound democracy are being stifled by the bramble-bush of bureaucracy and the Catholic laity, too, is enmeshed in haphazard and picayune officiousness. And we probably could meet with greater success the challenge of our

times, the progressive secularization of our public life, the enslavement and corruption of ideas by unprincipled press, radio and television monopolies, and the whole rubbish of nightclub and Hollywood 'culture.'

“But in those important formative years of our adolescent American culture many opportunities were relegated or sadly neglected. Much promising seed went to waste. Some, of course, had no depth of earth and soon withered away. Some was choked by thorns. Some was trodden down in the quarrels of words and ideas. Some was eaten up – not by birds of the air but by the gophers of Liberalism and the moles of Secularism. *Testem benevolentiae* was never accorded the appreciation befitting that important document. It was, by way of false apologetics, by bold assertions and innuendoes, partly talked to death, partly enshrouded in complacent silence as if a misinformed Pope had condemned and tried to clarify obtuse ideas which only existed in the fertile imagination of some Frenchman and later, 'over there' were resurrected in the shape of Modernism – of which we in America, of course, hardly knew more than the name!

“It would be a grave injustice to deny that, with the grace of God, America has become a land of great and glorious achievements. But whenever we feel the temptation to look down upon the poor publicans of other countries, it is well to remember the greater opportunities showered on us, and to ponder on the neglect and omissions of a former period, and to draw from the lessons of the past salutary resolutions for the present and the future.”

WORK FOR FUTURE HISTORIANS OF AMCHURCH

Over the course of the past nine months, I have come to the conclusion that Joseph Matt was one of the greatest – if not the greatest – American Catholic journalist of the 20th century. One wishes that some aspiring scholar, with a working knowledge of German, would consider studying and translating the German-language editorials he wrote for *Der Wanderer* from 1898 to 1931. No doubt he had some very strong opinions on subjects now before the public, such as the Federal Reserve and the Income Tax, as well as many other political developments from a Catholic perspective.

The Wanderer's English edition debuted in January 1931, and this writer, for one, would love to see and study his reports and editorials on the New Deal, the economic, social and political issues of the day, and the rush to the inevitable World War II.

If only the resources were available for a proper study of this giant of American Catholic journalism.

In the meantime, Joseph Matt's “Centenary of Catholic Life in Minnesota” is the finest

history of the years of “storm and stress” in the battle for the 19th century American Church, told from the point of view of a happy warrior who knew he had lost the battle when it was raging – but never stopped fighting.

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