

Catholic History Society

**THE  
CATHOLIC  
REVIVAL  
IN  
NEWPORT**

(The First Hundred Years)

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1828

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Collingside, judging the present time favorable for <sup>the</sup> separation of the Newport from the Irish mission, appointed the Rev. John Bunker Incumbent of the Newport mission & the Rev. Robert Gates Incumbent of Port of War, ~~on~~ the 29<sup>th</sup> of August 1828 —

It was agreed by mutual consent that the Rev. John Bunker should continue on at War to the 25<sup>th</sup> of Dec. & that the Rev. Robert Gates should do duty at Newport & receive his portion of the annual income of the Newport mission up to the 25<sup>th</sup> of December. They, however, took possession of their respective missions on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December 1828.

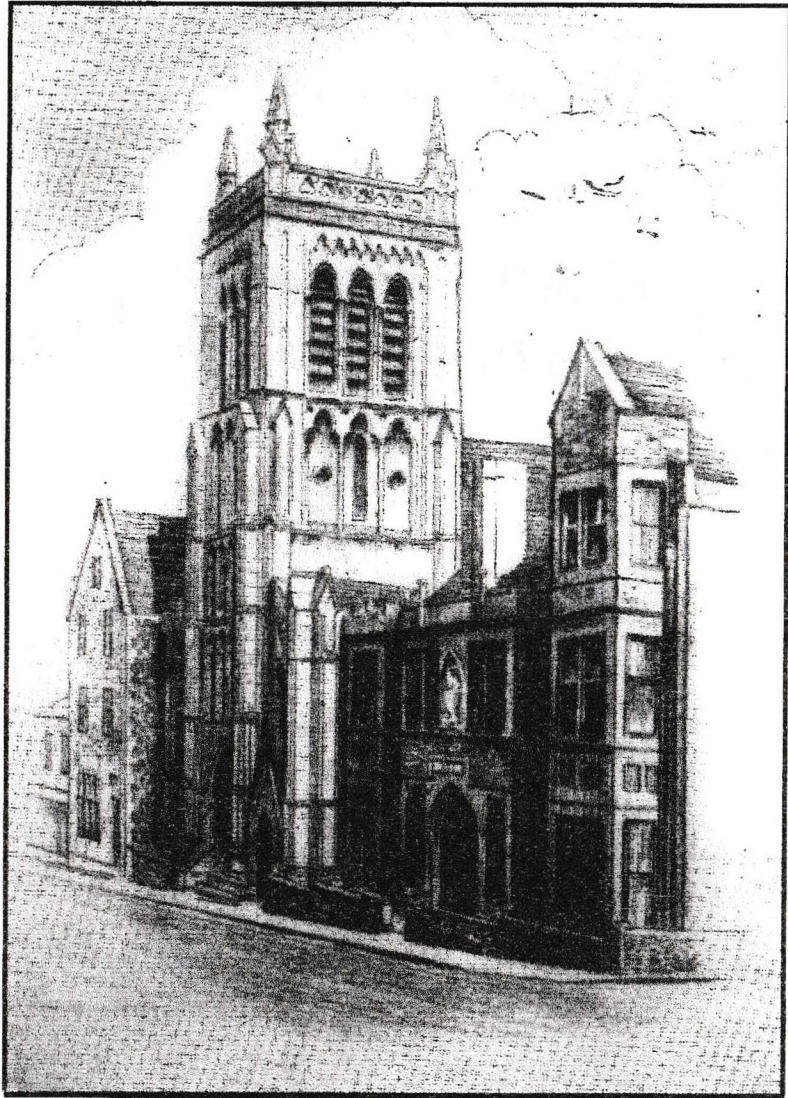
# THE CATHOLIC REVIVAL IN NEWPORT

(The First Hundred Years)

by

Edward Curran





St.Mary's Stow Hill 1840

## THE CATHOLIC REVIVAL IN NEWPORT

### **The First Hundred Years**

In 1800 the Catholics of the town numbered about twenty and they had to travel to Caerleon to hear Mass, said once a month by a priest from Llanarth Court.

Fr. William Barnes was sent to Newport in 1809. he said Mass in the upper room of a house on the corner of High Street and Market Street. The first congregation consisted of Mrs. Pye, occupier of the house, Dr. James Hawkins, Philip Williams of Crindau and Jerry Driscoll and his wife. This small gathering comprised the three national elements which contributed to the restoration of Catholicism in Newport.

The old Welsh Catholics were represented by Philip Williams whose mother was the grand niece of the famous Bishop Pritchard, Vicar Apostolic of the Western District from 1713 to 1750. Two of Philip's sons were Monsignori Edward and James Williams, successively Presidents of Prior Park College. Dr. James Hawkins was a member of an English Catholic family while Jerry Driscoll and his wife were an advance guard of that great host of Irish Catholics, poor in everything but faith who did so much to restore and consolidate Catholicism in Newport.

### **The First St. Mary's**

In 1812 a small chapel was built on the site now occupied by the church. John Jones of Llanarth gave the land and stone with £500 as an endowment. It was opened in November 1812. "There was no High Mass, Fr. Haley gave a good sermon. The chapel was crowded and everyone was much pleased."



The Jones family of Llanarth were- part of the illustrious clan of Herbert who were Lords of Llanarth from 1465. They adopted the name of Jones in 1587 (possibly because of the new religion) and reverted to Herbert in 1848.

About 1822 Mr. John Jones built a house adjoining the church. A further strip of land was necessary for this and Sir Charles Morgan, hearing that this was for a priest, generously gave the land at a nominal rent.

Fr. Burke of Usk offered to move to the new priest's house and the actual existence of Newport as an independent mission dates from August 29th 1828.

To the dismay of the parishioners the Bishop signified his intention of moving Fr. Burke. The result was that forty-five men of the parish signed a petition pleading for him to remain, sadly without success. One of the signatories was James Loughlin one of the first Irish settlers in Cardiff. He walked to St. Mary's to attend Mass. Father Burke left the town for America and was succeeded by Father Patrick Portal, who also served Cardiff, Pontypool and Merthyr, and his devoted work shortened his life.

Mr. Lewis, a convert, father of Monsignor Peter Lewis and an employee of Crawshay Bailey rented a club room at Rhymney in the 1830's.

Fr. Portal would ride over to say Mass and he deputed his host to preach the sermon. Afterwards when outside the inn with Fr. Portal starting on horseback to Merthyr, the road was lined with Welshmen who raised a shout "God save the horse - but the devil take the rider." They were in a threatening mood and would have pelted the priest with stones but for the respect they had for Mr. Lewis. Father Portal died on 10th December 1835 at Llanarth Street, Newport, before his fortieth year.

Fr. Edward Metcalfe arrived at St. Mary's in 1836. A

Yorkshireman, he had been professed as a Benedictine monk at Ampleforth in 1816. A brilliant linguist, he was a master of Hebrew, a Latin scholar, first rate Grecian, a master of French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and German. Released from his religious vows at the Abbey he became chaplain to the Mostyn family at Talacre, North Wales. There he learned Welsh and then translated the prayer book "Garden of the Soul" into Welsh.

### **Irish Immigrants**

The population of the town was increasing at a phenomenal rate and the number of Catholics was about 1,800. The immigrants were arriving from Ireland. The port records state that in April 1835 the sloop "Joseph" arrived from Clonakilty with 36 pigs and 68 passengers. The "Catherine" arrived from Cork with 98 passengers in excess of her authorised number. She was observed unloading passengers two miles below the Watch Tower. The master of the "Mary" from Cork was prosecuted for bringing more than twenty passengers. When the vessel left Cork forty-six passengers were on board and seventeen were put ashore at the mouth of the Usk, and a number were forced overboard into the mud. Some immigrants were examined by magistrates and without visible means of support were chargeable to the rates. They were sent back to Ireland. Mary Driscoll from Cork was examined by Lewis Edwards Esq. She was found under a hay mow having been lying there two days and nights with three of her toes fallen off with frostbite.

### **A New Church**

The modest chapel was now too small and in March 1837 Father Metcalfe asked Mr. J. J. Scholes of London to prepare plans for a church and schools. The only school for Catholics at this time was held in the old tithe barn opposite St. Woolos Church. Mass was said here while the new church was being built.



## The Chartists

In November 1839 the Chartist rioters passed down Stow Hill ordering the workmen on the church to join, but they took no part in the attack on the Westgate Hotel. A hundred Irishmen were enrolled to protect the Docks.

## This Impressive Gothic Church

There was great excitement and pride among the Catholics of Newport as this impressive Gothic church was completed. The original design contained a spire but this was never added and the height and width of the building was reduced to keep the cost within £2,500, which almost bankrupted the Diocese.

The "Merlin", at the time the only local newspaper, carried an extensive report of the opening and consecration of the church on 11th and 12th November 1840. Father Metcalfe made the occasion a memorable one by securing the attendance of several prelates and the services of some of the finest musicians and vocalists in the country.

## November 11th 1840

Bishop Collier sang Pontifical high Mass in the presence of Bishop Griffiths of the London District and Bishop Brown, Bishop Apostolic of Wales. Twenty-eight priests were in the sanctuary and a congregation of eight hundred including very many leading individuals of the Protestant religion and respectable dissenters.

Bishop Brown in his sermon reminded the congregation that 'scarcely a few years since and our rites were proscribed, they were driven into retired houses and obscure chambers, every approaching step was hearkened to with suspicion lest it be the footfall of a pursuivant or spy. Our enemies mocked us as a race soon to be extinct. Where was the obscure chamber is now the splendid church, emulating the architectural glories of former

## DEDICATION OF ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, NEWPORT, MONMOUTHSHIRE.

" On Wednesday, 11th and Thursday, 12th November, 1840. Principal Vocal Performers : Mrs. T. Millar (Bath), Mrs. Searle (formerly Miss Novello), Miss Whitnall (of Liverpool), Miss Dolby, Messrs. Thomas Millar (Bath), J. A. Novello, and W. C. Manners. Assisted by an efficient chorus. Mr. Vincent Novello will preside at the new organ which will be opened on this occasion. The whole of the musical arrangements will be under the direction of Mr. J. A. Novello. *November 11th.* The morning service will begin at 11 a.m. 'Come let us adore.' Pontifical High Mass sung by the Right Rev. Dr. Collier, Vicar Apostolic of Mauritius.

<i>Kyrie</i>	...	...	...	...	Mozart No. 13.
<i>Gloria</i>	...	...	...	...	Haydn No. 3.
Sermon by Right Rev. Dr. Brown, Vicar Apostolic of Wales.					
<i>Credo</i>	...	...	...	...	Mozart 12.
Offertory (Mrs. Searle)	...	<i>Veritas mea</i>	...	...	Gulielmi.
<i>Sanctus and Benedictus</i>	...	...	...	...	Beethoven.
Elevation (Miss Dolby)	...	<i>O Salutaris Hostia</i>	...	...	Cherubini.
<i>Agnus Dei and Dona</i>	...	...	...	...	Mozart No. 1.
<i>Domine</i>	...	...	...	...	Mozart.
Evening Service at 6.0 p.m.					Solemn Vespers.
Tones and <i>Iste Confessor</i>	...	...	...	...	Gregorian.
<i>Magnificat</i>	...	...	...	...	Danby.
Salve Regina	...	...	...	...	V. Novello.
Sermon by Right Rev. Dr. Wiseman."					

## A Sacred Concert followed :—

<i>Ave Maria</i>	...	Mrs. Searle	...	Cherubini.
<i>Veni Sancte Spiritus</i>	...	Miss Dolby	...	Newkomm.
<i>Laudate</i>	...	Mrs. Millar and Chorus	...	Zingarelli.
<i>Alma Virgo</i>	...	Mrs. Millar	...	Himmel.
<i>Te Deum</i>	...	Mrs. Searle	...	Romberg."

## On the following day :—

" November 12th. 'Come let us adore.'

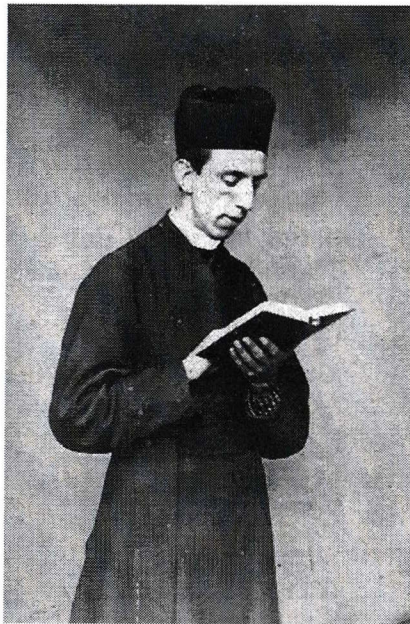
<i>Kyrie</i>	...	Miss Whitnall	...	Haydn No. 3.
<i>Gloria</i>	...	Mrs. Millar	...	Haydn No. 4.
Sermon by Right Rev. Dr. Briggs, Yorkshire.				
<i>Credo</i>	...	Miss Whitnall and Mrs. Millar	...	Haydn No. 1.
Offertory <i>Verites mea</i>	...	Mrs. Searle	...	Gulielmi.
<i>Sanctus and Benedictus</i>	...	Mrs. Searle	...	Mozart's Requiem
Elevation <i>O Salutaris</i>	...	Mrs. Millar	...	Himmel.
<i>Agnus Dei</i>	...	Mr. J. A. Novello	...	Haydn No. 5.
<i>Dona Nobis</i>	...	Miss Whitnall	...	Haydn No. 16.
<i>Domine</i>	...	Mrs. Searle	...	V. Novello.

Tickets at each service 5/- and 2/6. A few select places 7/-. Tickets to be had at Messrs. Clapperton, Evans', Oliver's, Reid's and Loder's, Booksellers, Newport."





Fr. Dom Cavalli  
Rector of St. Mary's  
1847 - 1892



Br. George Clarkson  
Head of St. Mary's  
School  
1850 - 1884

days and erected in the spirit of Catholic zeal such as raised in the ages of faith. Where our sacrifices were celebrated with terror, stripped of all their solemnity, we now have all the impressive ceremonies of our ritual - zealous worshippers crowd around the altar, a concourse of priests clad in their symbolic vestments gather around the sanctuary. Surely there must be an enduring vitality in Catholicity which alone would be satisfactory evidence of its divine origin.'

### **Tribute to Father Metcalfe**

The 'Monmouthshire Merlin' report included a tribute to Father Metcalfe of whom in the character of pastor and neighbour the public of Newport of all denominations speak in terms of attachment or respect. The church had been built with money raised from public subscription and among the most generous contributors were the Jones families of Llanarth and Clytha and a number of Protestants had also given monetary assistance, but it would be an injustice to those who are poor in purse but rich in faith - the Irish working classes - to omit stating that their pence given with warm hearts were weekly added to the subscription list.

### **Buried in St. Mary's**

Another generous contributor to the fund was Joseph Beaumont, agent to the Llanarth Estate. He died at Clifton after much suffering, a few years after the completion of the building. His body was brought from Bristol by packet boat and is buried in the Lady Chapel, the spot marked with a brass plate.

### **Lady Altar**

The Officers and Men of the 37th Rgt. (literally a Catholic Regiment) stationed in Newport presented the Lady Altar to the church. The priests had received a letter from Field Marshall the Duke of Wellington, requesting they provide spiritual care for the men.



### **Franciscan Assistant**

Father John Bernardine Davison O.S.F. arrived towards the end of 1841 to assist Fr. Metcalfe. He was a most zealous priest and as the 'Merlin' informs us "might be seen at all hours visiting the destitute in their cheerless homes, plumbing the depths of human wretchedness, administering food to the famishing or teaching the best of lessons - how to die." He gave his life for his flock, dying of typhus fever on 1st February 1842 and is buried under the new altar in the church.

### **Famine in Ireland**

More immigrants were arriving, some transported free of charge, as ballast instead of lime or shingle. Most vessels had no lifeboats or lifebuoys. The 'Merlin' reports that these poor people 'were seen daily parading our streets, men, women and children, without shoes or stockings, begging at shops and houses.' They crowded into insanitary dwellings in the central part of the town (St. Paul's church area, Llanarth Street, Ebenezer Bank). The whole neighbourhood is in a most unhealthy state (wrote Dr. Woollett, a Catholic, in his Public Health Report). Drains are stopped, accumulations of filth abound, typhus fever as well as other epidemics rages with the greatest violence. An outbreak of cholera began in Rees's Court and Irish Row where there are 22 houses, each inhabited by several families and not a single privy to any of the houses. In Fothergill Street there are 21 houses - each room in each house inhabited by a family. They sleep on beds of shavings and rags - windows closed - fireplaces stopped up. I found 42 human beings sleeping in a room 12ft by 14ft. In Charles Street a lodging house with six rooms inhabited by thirty persons most of whom collect rags and bones and some traded in large quantities of dried fish, all of which are heaped in the rooms where they sleep.

### **Father Metcalfe leaves St. Mary's**

Father Metcalfe left the parish in 1843 for Trenchard Street,

Bristol. Later he was transferred to Leeds where he died of typhus in 1847.

Rev. Dr. Baldaconi succeeded Fr. Metcalfe and he commenced the building of the boys and girls schools which stood at the back of the church.

The schools opened in August 1847 with accommodation for 130 boys and 120 girls. The 'Merlin' (July 1849) appealed for financial assistance for the children because they are the poorest in the town.

### **The arrival of the Rosminians**

In June 1847 in response to repeated requests to their founder, Fr. Antonio Rosmini, the Fathers of Charity took charge of St. Mary's. Fathers Peter Hutton and Fortunatus Signini were the first to arrive but within two months Fr. Signini was stricken with fever and Father Hutton's health broke down shortly afterwards.

### **Fr. Dominic Cavalli**

In July 1847 Fr. Rinolfi became Rector and Fr. Dominic Cavalli his assistant. Two years later Fr. Cavalli succeeded Father Rinolfi as Parish Priest at the age of twenty-eight.

The commencement of his pastorate was marked by an outbreak of cholera during which he repeatedly risked his life by his unselfish service to the sick. Called out night after night, he trudged down to the slums. On one occasion no one was left of a family to put the last victim into a coffin. He undertook the task with the help of a neighbour, who died shortly afterwards. Dominic Cavalli was three times on the brink of death. In 1864 the Provincial was informed, "What with leeches, he has nine on his side, blisters, medicines and no food he is in a deplorable state." He recovered and was Rector for forty-three years. When he died in 1892 he lay in state for three days. An immense



number of people visited the church. Protestants vied with Catholics to pay their last respects.

### School Money 1850

A schools committee was formed to collect from the faithful each week through~ out the year. The town was divided into nine districts and collectors appointed to call upon heads of families and resident lodgers for their penny subscription. Collectors included Dan Shea, Michael Hurley, John Fitzgerald, Tom McCarthy and Dennis Murphy.

### New Newport Cemetery

The graveyard at St. Woolos was now full and Newport opened the first local authority cemetery in the country. Fr. Cavalli applied for a part to be allocated to the Catholic community for Catholic burials. The Burial Board refused so the Rector and his advisors sent the application to the Privy Council. It was then forwarded to Palmerston, the Prime Minister, who ordered the Burial Board to concede.

### The Hierarchy is restored

In 1850 the Holy Father decided to restore the Hierarchy to England and Wales, replacing Vicars Apostolic with Bishops based in towns and cities as in Pre-Reformation days. The reaction was one of fury and resentment throughout the land. At Portsmouth a meeting recommended that Catholic Bishops be put aboard a Man-o-War and shipped across to the continent.

### Protest in Usk Town Hall

Three hundred and fifty gentry and clergy of Monmouthshire signed a petition protesting and they gathered at a meeting at Usk Town Hall, in December. Packed to the doors - a call was made to hold the meeting outside. Those inside refused to move.

The High Sheriff, Crawshay Bailey, was in the chair supported by Captain Somerset, Sir Thomas Phillips (Mayor of Newport

## Early Growth

In 1863 Fr. Cavalli submitted a report on the history of Catholicism in Newport since 1800. It included a table giving detailed information on the Catholic population of Newport since the opening of St. Mary's new church in 1840, and continuing growth emphasised the need for the new St. Michael's Church.

Year	Catholic Population	Con-versions	Easter Com-munic'ns	Baptisms	Marr'ges	Deaths*	Con-firmed	Average No. of Children on Boys' School Registers**	Girls	Infants
1841	2000	8	317	122	11	33	121	—	—	—
1842	—	—	—	143	18	47	—	—	—	—
1843	—	—	—	117	17	33	—	—	—	—
1844	2000	8	573	122	19	18	—	—	—	—
1845	2000	11	610	93	27	19	—	—	—	—
1846	2000	22	700	139	29	7	139	—	—	—
1847	2300	6	600	132	19	1	—	98	—	—
1848	2300	6	600	156	29	79	—	130	120	—
1849	2500	40	1200	185	35	99	217	141	155	—
1850	2800	25	1100	184	68	45	—	152	160	—
1851	3000	32	1626	204	44	24	—	170	201	—
1852	3000	42	1510	214	62	32	390	164	190	—
1853	3500	22	1360	218	82	57	—	190	186	—
1854	3500	15	1606	240	86	90	—	183	200	—
1855	3500	13	1527	264	51	130	279	175	202	—
1856	4500	12	1858	257	67	152	—	189	214	—
1857	4700	12	1450	269	56	119	—	178	222	180
1858	5000	20	1753	267	60	166	505	180	199	206
1859	4500	17	2041	260	60	111	—	173	193	240
1860	3500	5	1593	229	32	99	—	170	196	256
1861	3000	20	1730	196	29	101	222	167	193	260
1862	3500	20	1600	204	35	107	—	165	179	256

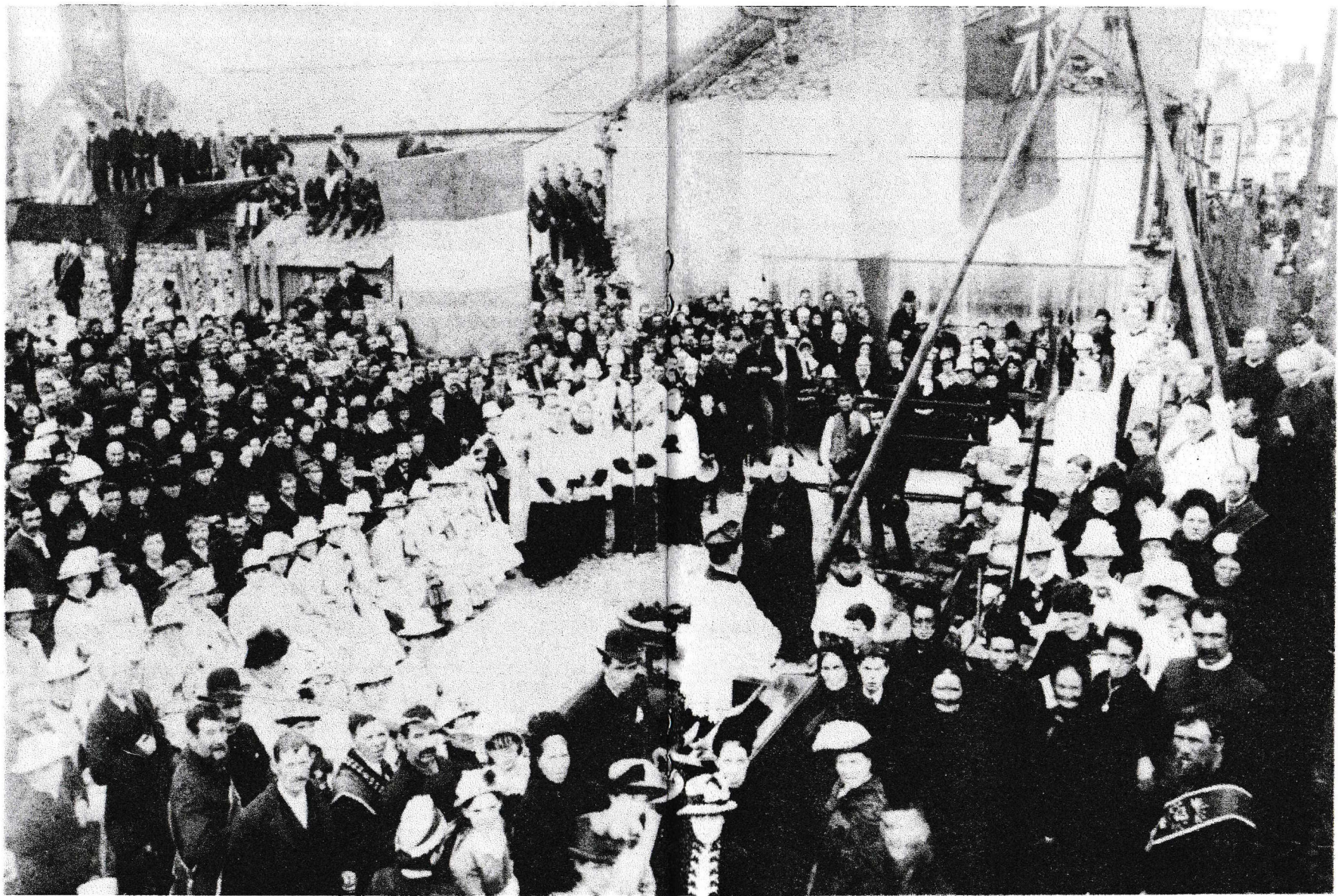
\*Not correctly kept till 1856 owing to our not having a burial ground.

\*\*It can not be ascertained for the years preceding the opening of the present Schools.

(The apparent reduction of population in 1859 was caused by the opening of new missions.)

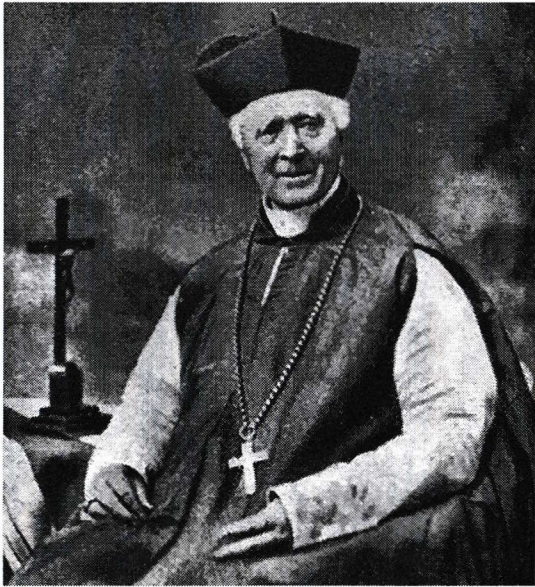
The Catholic Mission of Newport was the "Mother Mission" which gave life to the missions at Cardiff, Merthyr, Pontypool and Risca.



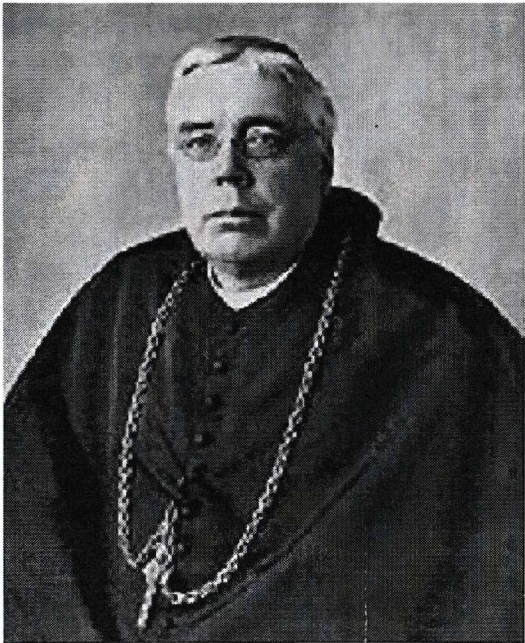


Laying of the foundation stone of St. Michael's Church. Sept 29th 1886





Bishop Brown  
of Newport  
1850 - 1880



Bishop Hedley  
of Newport  
1881 - 1916

1839) and J. Rolls, Monmouth.

Octavius Morgan (Tredegar family) moved a resolution condemning the Papal announcement, "If we allow this law to be enacted the liberties and constitution of this country will be at an end." Many speakers expressed outrage.

John Herbert of Llanarth, a Catholic, rose to speak. Great interruptions and shouts of "We don't want to hear him". The Chairman appealed for calm. Mr. Herbert then expressed his warm and undivided allegiance to the Queen (cries of "Jesuitry" and "You can't serve two masters"). He was supported by Francis Vaughan of Courtfield, Colonel of the Monmouthshire Regiment, Privy Chamberlain to the Pope, father of Cardinal Vaughan.

"Roman Catholics were said to hold a divided allegiance - when the Spanish Armada approached our shores - who led the Royal Fleet but Lord Howard, a Catholic brave and loyal. When successful armies of England achieved brilliant conquests at Salamanca, at Toulouse and at Waterloo, they were brave fellows, gallant boys, heroes all. We wait for the balmy days of peace to insult and outrage the religious feelings of our brave Irish troops."

### **Bishop of Newport**

The Hierarchy was soon accepted. In 1850 Bishop Thomas Brown became the first Bishop of Newport. He had been a Superior at Downside Abbey and had taught theology to Archbishop Ullathorne. Although his Chapter was at Belmont Abbey, he lived for some years at the old Presbytery in Stow Hill. His mother is buried in Newport cemetery.

### **Dr. Robert Woollett**

Dr. Robert Woollett was the Medical Officer of Health for



Newport and the leading Catholic layman. The church of St. Julius and Aaron in Caerleon was erected in 1884 at the Doctors expense. He was a magistrate and a severe one. A flagpole was fixed to the tower of St. Mary's and a large silk Papal Flag was flown on special occasions both given by Dr. Woollett. On the morning of his funeral the flag, flown at half mast, became entangled with a pinnacle of the tower which broke in two and crashed through the roof of the church during the Requiem Mass, breaking up in the centre aisle. No one was hurt.

### **St. Mary's Boys' School**

Brother George Clarkson I.C. was appointed to the school in 1850 and remained until 1884, most of the time as Headmaster. He was a strict disciplinarian but secured and retained the affection of his pupils, some of whom recalled their school days to the writer in the 1950's.

The schools were regularly inspected and the H.M.I. report in 1867 states that "This has been for many years one of the few schools I visit with unmixed satisfaction. I have to praise and acknowledge the invaluable service of conscientious and capable teachers." The Education Department approached the Rosminians for the release of Bro. George so that he could become an Inspector, but he informed them that he had no wish to leave the boys of St. Mary's.

Pupil teachers assisted the staff. In 1876 Hugh O'Neill was taken ill with a bad fever. He died in two days of typhus, aged 13 years.

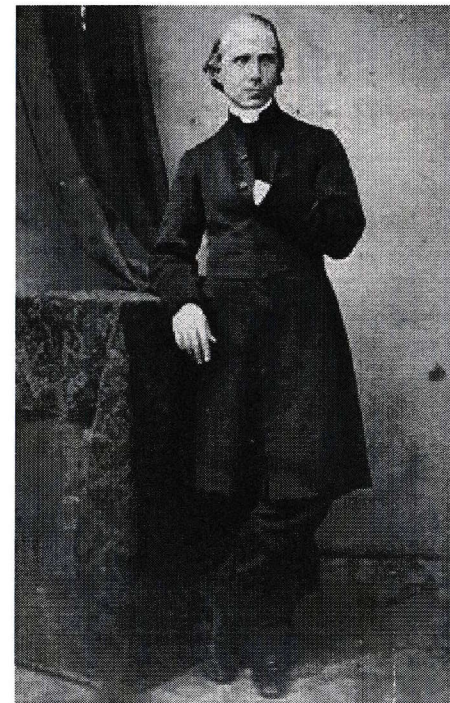
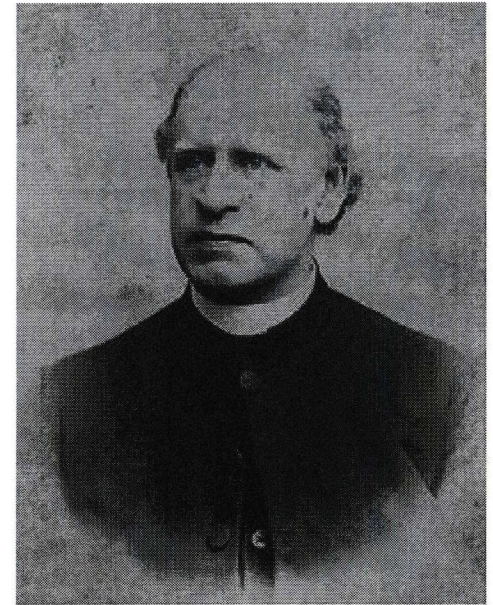
### **School Log Book 1867**

H.M. Inspectors were equally impressed with the work of the Rosminian Sisters of Providence. "Their department is excellently taught."

### **1875**

Unable to meet expenses so all children, except orphans, pay 2d.

Fr. Michael Bailey  
Rector of St. Mary's  
1892 - 1904



Fr. Richardson  
Founder of  
The Holy War



# MONSTER PIC-NIC, CLYTHA PARK,

17th August (if not fine, the Day after or the following Week),

FOR MEMBERS OF THE

## ASSOCIATION OF OUR LADY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF DRUNKENNESS.

The Members will assist at High Mass before starting. The Procession from the Church to the Station will be as follows:—The SAX-HORN BAND, headed by the beautiful New Banner of the Association, representing that passage in the Apocalypse xii. chap., 1st verse. The Men three abreast, then the Women, followed by the SCHOOL FIFE AND DRUM BAND in full dress, at the head of the School Children.

### A SPECIAL TRAIN

Will be in readiness for the journey. The Members will of course take their Dinner with them, and Pic-Nic on the Grass.

The Banners used in the Procession will have the following inscriptions in gold and colours:—Mater Immaculata. Rosa Mystica. Janua Caeli. Refugium peccatorum. Auxilium Christianorum. Causa nostrae libertatis. Prudence. Justice. Fortitudo. Temperance. We have one Enemy, not Drink but Drunkenness. "Our Help is in the Name of the Lord." Erin-go-bragh—Try again.

In the Park there will be Tents, and plenty of Ale, Cider, Porter, Ginger Beer, &c.

At the Castle Tea will be provided for all, by the kind liberality of Mrs. JONES of Clytha, and Dinner at the House for the First-Class Passengers who are Members of the Association. There will be various old English Sports; and Two or Three Bands, besides numbers of Violins, will enable those who are inclined to enjoy the merry dance.

### TICKETS, FOR MEMBERS ONLY,

Including Ale, Cider, Porter or Ginger Beer, Tea, and Railway Fare there and Back, 1s. each. Children ATTENDING the Schools Half-Price. FIRST-CLASS TICKETS, 7s. 6d.

To be had in the Schoolroom on FRIDAY Evening next, at Seven o'clock, and on SUNDAY Afternoon at Two o'clock.

Further particulars as to time, &c., will be announced later.

a week.

#### 1881 (December)

Heavy fall of snow, sent teachers to bring in the babies from home.

#### 1884 (November 29th)

This being election day, children were dismissed fearing streets would become riotous.

#### 1895 (March)

Great distress among the poor on account of the prolonged cold, many families starving.

Names of absentees were announced from the altar on Sundays and a list pinned to the church door.

#### School Band

Bro. George was head of the school band. Their uniform was of the period of Charles II. The Newport School Band had been booked to play in aid of a Non-Conformist Chapel on Good Friday 1888. Father Knight informed the School Board that the Catholic children would not play on that day. The Chairman said that it must play without them. Mr. Darby said that the Catholic children were the backbone of the band. "Take them out and the band would not be worth listening to, a disgrace to the schools."

#### The Holy War

Father Richard Richardson came in 1857. He was to see more than one term in Newport. A zealous temperance advocate he founded "The Holy War" which found a place in its ranks alike for the total abstainer and the moderate drinker. Drunkenness was a problem in the town.

The association, under the patronage of Our Lady of the



Immaculate Conception, held their annual meeting in the Town Hall under the Presidency of the Mayor. Moderation was the aim of the movement. Total membership was 2,479.

### **Monster Picnics**

Monster picnics were held each year and venues included Clytha Park, Caerphilly Castle and Caldicot Castle.

### **Procession to St. Mary's**

Members gathered at the Cattle Market then processed through the town to St. Mary's led by the Saxhorn Band. Banners carried were inscribed in gold and colours, with inscriptions such as Mater Immaculata, Rosa Mystica and Refugium Peccatorum. After Mass the members processed to the station where the Station Master personally controlled the boarding of the special train.

### **Clytha House**

At Clytha, the home of the Herbert family, the proceedings began with the Band playing a hymn to Our Lady then a blessing was given. Then there were races, football and dancing to the Band. Picnic lunches were taken and a charge of a shilling was made for the railway fare and ale, cider, porter, ginger beer or tea. First Class tickets were available at 7s 6d. This included a dinner served in the Grand Dining Room of the house.

### **Notice for Midnight Mass 1860**

Mass at 11.30 p.m. No one can enter without a ticket. Please do not bring strangers doors open at 10 o'clock - no tickets sold at the door. No infants. No one can send another to keep their place. The names of those who came drunk last year have been kept and they will not be allowed in this year at all.

### **Fathers John and Michael Bailey**

These brothers were appointed to St. Mary's in 1862. Born in Wigan, their father was the first Catholic elected to Wigan Town

Council after Emancipation. John was studious and reserved. Michael was a man of action to whom obstacles were merely an incentive to increased energy. He spared no effort, physical or mental in the cause of Catholic Education and his work upon the School Board and the Board of Guardians was of immense and lasting value to the church in Newport.

Between 1880 and 1900 he collected £30,000 - equivalent to £3 million today building St. Mary's new schools, Holy Cross, St. Joseph's and St. Michael's schools and, in addition, the impressive St. Michael's church.

### **New Church (1886)**

"Truly (says the Star of Gwent) St. Michael's may be called the church of the poor. It was paid for almost entirely by the pence of the poor, and the coaltrimmers, the ironshippers and others freely and willingly gave their time and labour in the building. Catholic and even non-Catholic workmen would come after their day's work was over and help to dig the foundations, others who were out of work would give their whole day. Thus the foundations were dug almost without expense."

### **Compulsory Education**

In 1870 education became compulsory in this country. The young people had benefited from a voluntary system (church schools) supported by the State (12/- per pupil). It was now proposed to build board schools with grants of £12-12s per pupil. No doctrine distinctive of any denomination was to be taught.

It was decided to amalgamate the boys and girls at St. Mary's. The Sisters of Providence could not teach boys so, sadly, after 30 years service they left Newport.

Father Bailey visited Devizes in Wiltshire where the Sisters of St. Joseph of Annecy were in residence. He suggested that they



move to Newport and they agreed. They arrived in August 1873 and in addition to teaching in our schools for over a century, opened the impressive St. Joseph's Hospital and, more recently, St. Anne's Hospice.

In 1874 Mr. J. Herbert gave land for a school in Cross Street and at the opening of Holy Cross School the children sang a new hymn "God Bless Our Pope".

### **Benefit Societies**

Catholic Benefit Societies at this time included The United Brothers who met in the Ship & Pilot, feast day Easter Monday. The Hibernians met in the Wexford & Kinsale Arms, feast day Whit Monday. A Catholic Womens Club also met in the Wexford & Kinsale Arms, feast day August 15th and St. Patrick's Guild dined on St. Patrick's Day.

Each Society attended St. Mary's on feast days then marched through the town with banners flying and bands playing.

### **Mayor of Newport**

Mr. James Murphy the owner of a very large wagon works became Mayor of the town in 1868. He was one of a group of men always willing to help the clergy. Others were Con Collins, John O'Brien, James Moriarty, Tim Downey, John Bennett, Patrick Hale and Michael Manley.

Alderman D. A. Vaughan, Alderman Thomas Canning and Mr. C. Harrington were devout Catholics and they took a deep interest in the Irish people and their cause.

Daniel Augustine Vaughan although born in Brynmawr was educated at St. Mary's School under Bro. George. He was an active President of the Robert Emmet Branch of the United Irish League. His Requiem Mass was celebrated by Father Nolan I.C. whose uncle, Captain Nolan, carried the message to the Light Brigade from Lord Raglan at Balaclava. The South Wales Argus

reported that an immense concourse of spectators lined both sides of Stow Hill as the cortege left St. Mary's.

In memory of Alderman Vaughan a fund was opened to which people of the town contributed, resulting in the erection of a beautiful Lady Altar in St. Mary's.

### **Cardinal Manning**

Great excitement occurred in August 1881 with the visit of His Eminence to Newport. The crowd at the Railway Station gave him a great reception. His carriage was unhorsed and with enthusiastic demonstration drawn through the streets. The Catholic Drum and Fife Band led the procession. Three thousand people filled the Victoria Hall (the Lyceum) to hear him speak on Education.

Mr. J. Herbert presided. His Eminence remarked that those who planned state education in 1840 stated that intellectual instruction should be subordinate to the doctrines of revealed religion. Now it was proposed to build at great expense board schools where doctrinal religion is banned and to give minimal support to church schools. "If we desire our Church to be perpetuated we must maintain our own schools."

Dr. Woollett proposing a vote of thanks said, "Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury seven hundred years ago was the last Catholic Archbishop to visit Newport.

He came to preach a crusade against the infidel. It is not straining the analogy too far to say that if religious instruction be excluded from the education of the child, his little heart will soon be in the possession of the infidel."

### **New Bishop of Newport**

Bishop Brown died in 1880. He was succeeded by Dom Cuthbert Hedley O.S.B., the outstanding prelate in the country for the last twenty-five years of the century. The journal, The



Tablet, stated that among our Catholic writers he was inferior to only one, Cardinal Newman.

### **Rerum Novarum**

The Papal encyclical published at this time was concerned with the social problems of the day. A non-Catholic, Robert Blatchford, wrote the most widely read commentary on it. He was unimpressed but he had a high regard for Catholic priests. "I have met them in the slums engaged in works of mercy. I have met them in Ireland fighting for the people. I am satisfied that they are the most devoted and unselfish of all clergymen."

### **Death of Father Cavalli**

When Father Cavalli died in 1892 there were 3,800 Catholics at St. Mary's and 1,800 at St. Michael's. In 1896 St. Joseph's Infant School was opened in Maindee and in 1898 the old schools at the back of St. Mary's church were condemned and replaced in 1900 by the fine schools on Queens Hill, at a cost of £6,000.

### **Mansion House Banquet**

In 1892 Alderman David Evans was elected Lord Mayor of London. He gave a Welsh National Banquet at the Mansion House in the City of London. Among those present were the Duke of Beaufort, the Earl of Powis, the Bishop of St. David's and Lord Tredegar.

The loyal toast having been honoured, the Catholic Bishop of Newport responded to the toast of the Clergy. "It is fifty years", he said, "since many thousands of Irish people who now constituted his flock claimed the hospitality of Wales. There had not been much friction between the two races. That was owing first to the sterling qualities of his flock. But he must not forget the kindness of the Welsh people and of the employers of labour".

**The Catholic Truth Society of England and Wales' Annual Conference** was held in Newport in 1902. The inaugural lecture "Secondary Education" was given by Rev. Dr. Hinsley who was Cardinal Archbishop in World War II. On the final day 300 clergy and laity travelled by train to Tintern. It was a beautiful day and after exploring the Abbey they assembled in the main transept and sang 'Faith of our Fathers'.

### **Death of Father Bailey**

Father Michael Bailey died in 1904. For over forty years he had worked with great enthusiasm for the Church in Newport. His sister, referring to his last illness wrote, "The doctor thought that he could die at any moment. He sinks into a coma, then he is able to rally, but although his mind is clear he cannot express himself and this annoys him. He is thinking of the schools and tries to talk to the doctor and nurses about them."

Father Dan Hickey succeeded Father Bailey as Rector of St. Mary's in 1904. He exuded energy and alertness both physical and mental - in great demand as a public speaker with eloquence and wit for any occasion.

There were many funerals for children in those days. The Rector would pay the bill for the needy, and the deceased's school friends would visit the bereaved and pray at the open coffin of the departed.

A hundred years of Catholic Revival had been witnessed in the Parish of St. Mary's and the town of Newport. The community now looked forward to continued growth and success in the twentieth century.



The document setting up Newport as a separate mission (see inside cover) reads as follows: -

1828

The Rt. Revd. Dr. Collingridge Judging the present time favourable for the separation of the Newport from the Usk mission, appointed the Revd. John Burke Incumbent of the Newport Mission & the Revd. Robert Gates Incumbent of that of Usk on 29th August 1828 -

It was agreed by mutual consent that the Revd. John Burke should continue on at Usk to 25th of Deer. & that the Revd. Robert Gates should do duty at Newport & receive his portion of the annual income of the Newport up to 25 of December. They, however, took possession of their respective missions on the 22d of December 1828.

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The Rev Robert Gates agreed that the portion of salary due to him for Newport mission should be only at the rate of 90£. From August 29 to December 22 Mr. Gates' portion at the above rate amounts to £28..5..9 -

The Rev Robert Gates agreed that the portion of salary due to him for Newport mission should be only at the rate of 90£  
From August 29 to December 22 Mr. Gates' portion at the above rate amounts £ 28. 5. 9 -





Catholic History Society

**THE  
CATHOLIC  
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IN  
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