



Barquilla de la Santa Maria

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Dec. 31: Pope St. Sylvester I

December, 1993

THE CONVERSION OF SYLVESTER ROSECRANS (1)

by Rev. L. W. Mulhane

While a cadet at West Point, [William S.] Rosecrans obtained a few books treating of the Catholic Church from an old Irishman, who was in the habit of paying periodical visits to the institution to sell books and papers. In company with another cadet, now Very Rev. George Deshon, Superior of the Paulist Fathers of New York, he became interested in the claims of the Church and it was not long until his logical mind was convinced; and finally, two years after his graduation, while he was Assistant Professor of Engineering, in 1844, he was, in his own words, "baptized sub conditione, because it was a vague tradition that in my early days a Protestant or Wesleyan Methodist minister at my grandmother's instance had baptized me, following the traditional ritual of the Church of England in so doing." Shortly after his marriage his wife also became a Catholic, and in 1846 he was instrumental in converting his brother Sylvester, who eventually became the first Catholic Bishop of Columbus, Ohio, within whose diocese was located his birthplace, Homer, Licking County. The brothers were much attached to each other and their correspondence, when the one was at West Point and the other at Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio, was frequent. After the younger graduated, he paid his elder brother a visit, and as the two were taking a walk one day, they chanced to pass a Catholic church; whereupon the young lieutenant, to quote the words of one conversant (2) with the facts in the case, said to his brother: "It is high time, Sylvester, for you to put an end to this procrastination of yours; come in here and get baptized."

Mechanically obeying the command, and entering for the first time in his life a Catholic church, the same authority tells the story of the Bishop's conversion: "They soon reached an altar, before which, to the young brother's surprise, shone a lighted lamp, although it was broad daylight. 'Let us pray here,' said the captain, 'in the Real Presence, for two graces, the grace of light to know the truth, and the grace of strength to follow it'; and with this he knelt down. Sylvester also knelt, as a matter of courtesy to his brother, but by no means to pray. He gazed around for a while at the works of art within reach of his eyes, but not being in the habit of kneeling long at any time, and his knees aching, he turned to look at his brother, whom he found absorbed in God.

"The sight was too much for Sylvester. 'Wretch that I am,' said he to himself, 'while this truly good man is so earnestly interesting himself with Heaven for my soul's salvation, I am indifferent, as if it were none of my business. God is everywhere, and therefore, here; I, too, will pray for

strength and light.' And he did pray, so long and earnestly, that when he began to look for his brother, he found him in a remote part of the church. Up sprang Sylvester, and with agitated steps he approached the captain. 'Well, Sylvester,' whispered the latter, 'what will you do?' 'I wish to be baptized,' was the prompt reply; 'I hope the priest is at home.' Happily the priest was at home, and finding his caller already, thanks to his brother's good offices, well instructed in Catholic teachings, he had no hesitation in baptizing him and receiving him into the Catholic fold. Many years later, when the diocese of Columbus was erected, Rt. Rev. Sylvester Horton Rosecrans, who had been consecrated titular of Pompeiopolis, in partibus, on the feast of the Annunciation, 1862, and appointed Auxiliary to Archbishop Purcell, of Cincinnati, was transferred to the new See, and at once took possession of his vinyard."

The following letter received by the writer some years ago, it need not be mentioned, is highly prized:

Treasury Department, Register's Office.

Dec. 11, 1886.

Dear Father Mulhane: -- Bishop Rosecrans was baptized at Cold Spring on the North River opposite West Point, N.Y., by the Rev. Dr. Villani, pastor of the Catholic Church at that place, and in charge of the station at the Post of West Point, in the summer of 1846. I was his godfather and my wife his godmother. I do not remember whether it was sub conditione.

My baptism in 1841 was sub conditione, because it was a vague tradition that in my early infancy a Protestant or Wesleyan Methodist minister at my grandmother's instance had baptized me, following the traditional ritual of the church of England in so doing.

Yours most truly,

W. S. Rosecrans

To the Rev. L. W. Mulhane,
Mt. Vernon, Ohio

- 1) From Memorial of Major-General William Stark Rosecrans by L. W. Mulhane; Mt. Vernon, 1898; pages 48-50. Courtesy of the Ohio Historical Society.
- 2) Does any of our readers know Mulhane's source for these words?

LAWRENCE W. MULHANE
HISTORIAN/MT. VERNON PASTOR/CATHOLIC COLUMBIAN COLUMNIST
(Concluded, from Vol. XVIII, No. 11)

Anthony J. Lisska
Denison University

Catholic Columbian Columnist

As a weekly syndicated columnist for The Catholic Columbian, Mulhane attained great fame but probably little fortune. The Columbian was established by Bishop Rosecrans in 1875, soon after he became bishop of the new diocese of Columbus. Before coming to Columbus, Rosecrans both taught at the seminary in Cincinnati and was associated with Cincinnati's Catholic Telegraph. Rosecrans saw the need for a diocesan newspaper. Mulhane served

as a columnist for this paper for over a quarter of a century. He wrote under the by-line of "R.C. Gleaner" and his front page column was titled "The Catholic Viewpoint". In his column, Mulhane wrote forcefully about a variety of topics central to Catholicism in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century. The Columbian editor noted that Mulhane's writings "...were quoted in many newspapers and magazines of the country." Seen from the distance of nearly a century, one wonders--indeed, one is almost baffled--how, in turn of the century Mount Vernon, a busy pastor of a county-seat parish could be so well informed on the many issues central to a rapidly changing Catholic society and its principally immigrant churchgoers. One might argue that, with its strong railroad connections, Mount Vernon was not as isolated as it might appear from the perspective of the late twentieth century. Nonetheless, Mulhane must have mastered the essentials of what today is called "time management". Mulhane did have some connections with Kenyon College in nearby Gambier. An October, 1916, column discusses the founders of Kenyon College and the English family after whom the college was named.

Mulhane appears to have had a rather faithful following. Monsignor Herman Mattingly, himself a newspaper editor and published historian and genealogist, once told this author that while a university student in the 1920's, he and his classmates eagerly awaited the weekly appearance of The Catholic Columbian so that they might devour Mulhane's spirited columns.

The Debate with O'Daniel

It was as a Columbian columnist that Mulhane embarked upon a lengthy historical debate with the Dominican historian, Victor Francis O'Daniel. (8) The point of contention was the second oldest Catholic Church in Ohio. In his Catholic Encyclopedia article and in his History of St. Vincent de Paul's Parish, Mulhane argues that St. Luke's in Danville merited designation as the second oldest Roman Catholic Church in Ohio, after St. Joseph's in Somerset. In his Life of Fenwick, O'Daniel unraveled with care the origins of the first eight churches in Ohio. O'Daniel focused his attention on the date of dedication of the churches in question. He established with painstaking evidence that St. Luke's Church was dedicated in October, 1824. Thus, O'Daniel argued that the historical evidence suggested that St. Luke's is at best the seventh church to be dedicated in Ohio. Nonetheless, the Danville congregation had assembled earlier in the nineteenth century.

In the Columbian articles, Mulhane attempted to refute O'Daniel's account by appealing to oral traditions of Knox County's elder citizens and to various personal glimpses he had gathered over the many years he spent talking with the senior citizens about Danville and Mount Vernon. Mulhane used some of these sources in his 1895 book. Landlocked in Mount Vernon, Mulhane did not have readily available the many archival and library resources O'Daniel had. Hence, with greater access to the requisite materials, especially runs of early nineteenth century periodicals like the American Catholic Miscellany where early Ohio missionary reports were filed and published, O'Daniel could establish his case with greater ease and certainty.

Exemplary Pastor

Even given all his literary and historical activities, Mulhane never forgot that his primary vocation was that of pastor of a parish church. His

forty year service as pastor of St. Vincent de Paul's parish is exemplary. He cared for the people under his charge with grace and civility. He built the new St. Vincent's Church in 1923, organized the parish school and administered his parish with zeal. The list of organizations affiliated with the parish is amazing, most of which began under Mulhane's early tenure as pastor. Nonetheless, when the new church was nearing completion, Mulhane exhausted his own personal resources, it is said, to complete the tower on the magnificent new St. Vincent de Paul Church.

In 1885, he inherited a parish so financially strapped that on January 1, 1886, he wrote the following in the chronicle: "Financial report read and cash balance on hand stated to be two cents, which caused a smile through the congregation." An excellent fund-raiser, by 1892 the old debt has been liquidated completely, notwithstanding the construction of a new school building in 1890. In 1893, Mulhane could announce proudly that free tuition was available to families of the parish sending their children to the school.

Bishop Hartley wrote the following about his former St. Aloysius Seminary colleague, indicating in particular Mulhane's continuing concern for education:

He spent the best years of his life as a priest there, and labored day and night for the welfare of the parish. He was an eloquent preacher, a splendid schoolman, and always held his place on the diocesan school board, helping to guide the educational work of the diocese. (9)

Mulhane died on May 2, 1925 in Mount Vernon's Mercy Hospital, an institution he founded. He had been quite ill since the preceding September, suffering from what then was called "pernicious anemia". His passing merited front page coverage in The Catholic Columbian. The editor, James J. Carroll, treated his weekly columnist's passing with due honor and respect. This engaging and thoughtful intellectual, pastor and historian from Mount Vernon would now have a silenced pen.

ENDNOTES

Mulhane's death merited front page coverage in the May 8, 1925 Catholic Columbian. This extended article serves as a reservoir of biographical information. In addition, the editorial page contains a lengthy eulogy on Mulhane. The final page of the Columbian, which always served as a local news item page, featured that week a long piece on Mulhane's funeral complete with comments from Mount Vernon Area business and professional persons. The librarians at Ohio Dominican College kindly permitted the author's use of the Columbian microfilm.

The microfilm of The Catholic Columbian includes Mulhane's weekly articles from which one can gather the wide range of his interests. His History of St. Vincent de Paul's Parish contains an autobiographical account together with a fascinating ten year chronology. The author is indebted to Jim Logsdon for bringing this chronology to his attention and for reading with care earlier drafts of this biography. Mr. Logsdon also helped the author understand the Know-nothingism common to Mount Vernon in the last century and the importance of rail connections for that Knox County Seat. Monsignor Herman Mattingly's narrative on St. Aloysius Seminary provides some references

to Mulhane as a college student. However, Monsignor Mattingly's article incorrectly lists the date of Father Mulhane's death as May 22, not May 2, 1925. The October, 1986 issue of the Bulletin repeats Monsignor Mattingly's mistake on the date of Mulhane's death.

- 1) Bulletin , Vol. VII, Nos. 1 and 2 (January and February, 1981), pp. 1-8; 15-16.
- 2) Rev. L.W. Mulhane, History of St. Vincent de Paul's Parish (Mt. Vernon: Republican Book and Job Office, 1895), p. 57.
- 3) Mulhane, p. 14.
- 4) A rare copy of Mulhane's book is in the files of the Catholic Record Society.
- 5) The Catholic Encyclopedia; N.Y.: The Encyclopedia Press, Inc., 1908; Vol. IV, pp.149-150.
- 6) Msgr. Herman Mattingly, Bulletin, Vol. VII, No. 2 (February, 1981), pp. 15-16.
- 7) The Catholic Columbian, May 8, 1925, p. 1.
- 8) "O'Daniel and Mulhane on the Second Oldest Church in Ohio," Bulletin, Vol. XI, Nos. 9 and 10 [September and October, 1986], pp. 161-167; 169-174.
- 9) The History of the Diocese of Columbus, Vol. II [1918-1943], (Columbus, Ohio, 1943), p. 104.

TRADITIONS IN A CATHOLIC FAMILY
by Matthew K. Munhall

In my family both of my parents are Catholic and have been all their lives. All four of my grandparents were also raised in the Catholic faith. My Grandpa and Grandma go to Mass daily. So do my parents. I think this is a very good practice. We have been Catholic in my family for as many years as anyone can remember. My relatives keep many traditions from when they were younger, but many things changed in the Catholic Church over the years.

When my grandfather was my age he went to nine o'clock Mass every Sunday with his schoolmates. This Mass was set aside for all the school age children. He said, "the rest of the day was peaceful and spent with the family." There was no shopping, stores were closed and Sunday was a peaceful day when my grandparents and parents were young.

In my mother's parish, when she was in grade school, weekday Mass was well attended with sixty to seventy people attending in a parish of about eight hundred families. The priest most often did not give a homily at daily Mass and the Mass was said in Latin. My mother said, "I remember daily Mass as a very holy and peaceful time."

There are some things that my mother and father miss about the way the Church was when they were younger. My mother misses the fact that Catholics seemed to be in better harmony with each other and there was less disagreement. Also, she misses the greater reverence there seemed to be at Mass, especially regarding dress. My father misses the Latin Mass in that people seemed to attend more reverently also. He still serves Mass sometimes. My father still goes to retreats once a year. My mom still prays the rosary.

At St. Michael's parish we have a very successful festival and a large school. My parents have been very pleased with St. Michael's since their arrival in the parish in 1966.

Most importantly, the Catholic Church has helped my family become close to God our Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. My mother said, "the laws of

God and the Church have always helped guide me through life and have also taught me the peace and joy that come from trying to do God's will."

Sources

Josephine Barnett, grandmother, and Robert Barnett, grandfather, Oyster Bay, N.Y. Donald Munhall, father, and Josephing Munhall, mother, Worthington, O. Catholic Almanac; Huntington (Ind.): Our Sunday Visitor, 1982

[This essay was submitted in the Society's recent contest. Even though it was not judged among the top three, it was unique among the entries in its focus on Catholic family tradition and piety and so may be of interest to our readers. The author is a student at St. Michael school.]

ORIGINS OF GERMAN CATHOLICS OF COLUMBUS FROM THE HOLY CROSS PARISH CENSUS (Concluded, from Vol. XVIII, Number 11)

Walter, Lorenz, born 10 Oct., 1824 in Weissenburg, Elsass, son of Peter Walter and Barbara; died 24 June, 1903. Wife (1) Elizabeth Schwarz, married at Holy Cross. (one son) Wife (2) Balbina Mina Ehrler, born 31 March, 1834 in Diersburg, Offenburg, Baden, daughter of Xavier Ehrler and Ursula Moser; died 24 Apr., 1895. Married at Holy Cross, Aug. 17, 1854. (five children)

Weiler, Dominick, born 5 Aug., 1808 in Altdorf, Baden, son of Joseph Weiler and Ursula Goetz from Ettenheim, Minster. Wife (1) Maria Magdalena Herzog, daughter of Stephen Herzog and Maria Grever in Altdorf; died 13 Jan., 1848. Married 1843. Wife (2) Maria Eva Bedel, born 8 Feb., 1822, from Gross Kahl, Baiern; died 24 March, 1914. (seven children)

Weisz, Florian, born 25 Oct., 1822 in Schierheim, at Strassburg; died 18 Jan., 1901. Wife Maria Zettler, born 22 Oct., ----, Mßlsheim, Hessen Darmstadt [daughter of Jacob Zettler]; died 25 Feb., 1885. (four children)

Weisz, Florenz, born 30 April, 1855 [son of Florian, above]; died 29 Jan., 1911. Wife Maria El. Krumm, born 11 May, 1862, daughter of Henry Krumm (born 16 March, 1832 at Bronnweiler, Würtzbg) and Kath. Jßlnling (born 30 March, 1840 in Letzebach, Hessen Darmstadt). Married 18 May, 1887 at Holy Cross. (three children)

Welper, Wilhelm, born 1844, son of Andreas and Helena. Wife Maria Hermann, born 1 Aug., 1843 in Chillicothe. Married in Columbus. Cathedral parish. (two daughters)

Wenger, Franz, born 8 Dec., 1820 in Bayerfeld, Rheinpfalz, son of Carl Wenger and Maria Eva Grimm. Wife (1) Margaret Leibold, born 1821, daughter of Georg Leibold and Margaretha Sterz; died 1871. (two daughters) Wife (2) Carolina Lehmann, born 1853 in Zanesville, daughter of Philip Lehmann and Catharina, from Elsass. Married at St. Mary's. (two children) Sacred Heart Parish

Werner, Adam, born 14 Aug., 1840 in Baden, son of John Werner and Catharina; died 22 Jan., 1916. Wife Margaretha Trott, born Nov., 1849 in Rßmmels, Kurhessen, daughter of John Trott and Ernestina Trott. (four children)

Widmann, John, born 26 Feb., 1837 in Gutmandingen, Donaußschingen, Baden, son of Jacob Widmann and Theresia Engeser. Wife Rosina Ilchert, born 22 Nov., 1842 in Columbus, daughter of August Ilchert and Euphrosina Brossmer. Married at St. Mary's. (one daughter)

Wingendorf, Henry, born 29 June, 1823 in Steinebach, Gebbartsheim, Altekirch, Preussen, son of Peter Wingendorf; died 22 Nov., 1903. Wife Margaretha Luckhaupt, born 24 June, 1834 in Lärtzenbach, daughter of John Anton Luckhaupt and Margaretha; died 9 May, 1903. (four children)

Winkels, John Louis, born 20 June, 1819 in Malsch, Amt Wisloch, Baden, son of John Winkels and Barbara. Wife (1) Cath. Deschner, died with child. Wife (2) Anna Rosina Burger. Wife (3) Anna Katharina Krämer, born 6 Nov., 1840 in Hammelbach, Lindenfels, Hessen Darmstadt, daughter of Peter Kraemer and Barbara Hübner (widow of Philip Bauer of Hammelsbach who died in 1873, leaving three sons by her). (three Winkels children)

Winterfeld, Friedrich, born 12 Nov., 1825 in Meltz bei Rübel, Wredenhausen, son of Wilhelm Winterfeld. Wife Gertruda Eck, born 1831 in Hessen-Darmstadt, daughter of John Eck and Margaretha Schaefer. (two sons) "died out"

Winteroll, John, born 20 Jan., 1842 in Zählhingen, Dollach, Baden, son of Joseph Winteroll and Maria Lindenberger. Wife Maria Stutz, born 6 Dec., 1846 in Zimmen, Würtbg.; died 6 June, 1905. Married at Cincinnati St. John. (six children)

Wittmann, Christian, born 28 Oct., 1827 in Dingfeld, Hessesstadt, Bamberg, son of Nicolaus Wittmann and Barbara Netz. Wife Maria Magdalena Goldstein, daughter of Joseph Goldstein and Veronica Kolb from Krumbach, Baiern. (eight children)

Wittmann, Michael, born Sept., 1817 in Dingfeld, Schlüsselheld, Bamberg, Baiern, son of Franz Wittmann and Magdalena Weiss. Wife Anna Maria Franz, born in 1824 in Hessen, daughter of Conrad Franz; died 1888. Married in 1849. (six children)

Woelfel, Abraham, born 3 October (or 10 March?), 1832; died 23 May, 1912. Wife Maria Koenig, born 5 April, 1838 in Anstein, Baiern, daughter of Anton Koenig and Anna Maria Dichtmiller. Married 22 Sept., 1862. (five children)

Woelfel, Cyriac -- see Georg Hannauer

Woelfel, Joseph, born 16 July, 1836 in Columbus, son of Cyriac Woelfel and Christina. Wife Thecla Saile, born 14 May, 1842 in Weitingen, Oberamt Horb, Würt., daughter of Franz J. Saile and Maria. Married 23 Jan., 1862. (seven children)

Wolf, Michael, born 16 Oct., 1840 in Kreisenheim, Würzburg, Baiern, son of Michael Wolf and Eva Kuhn. Wife Rosalia Blüchner, born 12 July, 1843 in Oberriedenberg, Brückenau, Baiern, daughter of John Blüchner and Margaretha Blüchner; died 5 Feb., 1898. (three children)

Wolfram, Theodor, born 9 Oct., 1844, son of Joseph Wolfram and Elizabeth Hornung. Wife Adolphine Wiederhold, born 4 April, 1856 in Dingelstadt,

Eichsfeld, Prov. Sachsen, daughter of John F. Wiederhold and Rosalia Herold. Married 4 Oct., 1876 in Dingelstade. (five children)

Zengler, Joseph. Wife Emma Schaub. Married at Emmanuel's Church, Dayton. (two sons)

Zettler, Jacob, born 6 April, 1826 in Mülsheim, Darmstadt, son of Jacob Zettler and Cornelia Spindler; died 4 Jan., 1911. Wife Catharina Louisa Friedrich; died 1889. Married May 24, 1870. (six children) Anna Maria, daughter of Jacob and Cornelia, born Feb., 1819, died 1886.

Zettler, Louis, born Feb. 29, 1832; died 14 Oct., 1907. Wife Cath. Rose, born 24 Nov., 1840 in Aachen, Rhprvn., daughter of Bernard Rose and Catharina Foerster; died 25 April, 1898. (nine children)

Zimmer, John F., born 1817 in Medard, Kaiserslantern, Rheinpfalz, son of Franz Zimmer and Margaretha; died 23 June, 1895. Wife Christina Weidner, born 28 Dec., 1813 in Elmbach, Landau, Rheinpfalz, daughter of Bernard Weidner and Catharina Kauther; died 29 April, 1900. Married in Cleveland, 1838. (eight children)

Zimmer, John Jacob -- see Henry Frey

Zopf, Sebastian, born 30 May, 1833 in Borghausen, Stein, Baiern. Wife (1) Catharina Franz; died 11 Dec., 1874. Married in Wülfershausen. (four children) Wife (2) Barbara Höfer, born 7 Oct., 1843 in Langendorf, Unterwürzburg, daughter of John Höfer and Eva; died 15 March, 1916. Married at Wülfershausen, Stein, Baiern. (two children) St. Mary's church.

GIFTS TO THE SOCIETY'S LIBRARY

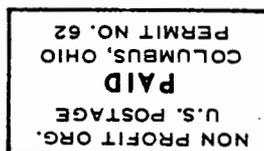
We are always grateful for gifts of books, photographs, and other memorabilia that expand our knowledge of the Church. Recently these items have been added to our collection:

Perry County, Ohio Male Index to Marriage Records, 1818-1914, 2 vols.;
Junction City: Perry County Chapter, Ohio Genealogical Society, 1992.
- purchased

Knights of Columbus: Charter, Constitution, Laws, 1910.
World Youth Day, Denver Colorado, 1993, Official Souvenir Magazine
World Youth Day '93 program
- gifts of Rosemary McMahon

Sixtieth Anniversary edition of The Catholic Columbian.
- gift of Fr. Charles J. Sargus, Idele Sargus, and Joseph Sargus

Catholic Record Society - Diocese of Columbus
197 E. Gay Street Columbus, Ohio 43215 Donald M. Schlegel, editor



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