

A CHILD OF IRELAND THE FOUNDING OF
THE NEW YORK PROVINCE OF SAINT ELIAS

ALFRED ISACSSON, O.CARM.

The Irish Carmelite, Andrew Day, wrote in 1852 to Joseph Lobina, the general, about the needs of Catholics in the United States. He explained that many Irish had emigrated there and their faith was exposed to many dangers. Day related that he had often been invited to work there by bishops and priests. He favored New York or Philadelphia.¹

As was the case with many of their fellow countrymen, the eastern shores of the Atlantic beckoned the Carmelites of Ireland. The provincial, Simon Carr, had in 1873 at least two of the province go to the United States for vacation. Apparently, these two were not the only ones to sail to America for their holidays.²

The Irish Province in 1889 had forty-six priests and fourteen clerical students in their membership. This does not include those members working in the United States in the Most Pure Heart of Mary Province. Twenty-three stationed in Dublin at Whitefriars Street was indicative of a surplus.³

Michael A. Moore was the Irish provincial, 1878-81, and visited Rome at the end of his term. The following year, he left for Australia. Moore had received from the general a commission to collect alms not only in Australia but also in North and South America.⁴ It was probably in connection with this work that Michael Moore was in New York where he met on September 5, 1887, a priest of the archdiocese, James McMahan. McMahan had studied in Canada and was ordained a Sulpician but was persuaded by John Farley, later to become the

¹ Day to Lobina, Dublin, Oct 16, 1852, Archives of the Order (AO), II Hib 3.

² Carr to Savini, Dublin, Nov 24, 1873; same to same, Dublin, May 18, 1874, AO, II Hib 1.

³ Visitation Report, Galli, Sept, 1890, AO, II Hib, 1.

⁴ Farrington to Savini, [Dublin], May 13, 1882, AO, II, Hib 1; *Regista Savini* (1863-1881) 94, AO, II CO1 (68).

cardinal archbishop of New York, to join the archdiocese where he had become the pastor of Saint Andrew's. In their conversations, McMahon offered Moore and the Carmelites an endowed parish and convent. When Moore told Archbishop Corrigan of New York of this, his initial reaction to this offer was favorable and Moore was optimistic.⁵

When Moore told McMahon of Corrigan's favorable reaction, McMahon put his offer into writing specifying the amount of money involved. Moore told his provincial, John Bartley, of McMahon's offer. He replied to Moore that he should go ahead and secure this foundation. When Moore showed McMahon's written offer and Bartley's permission to Corrigan, the archbishop said that he would see his consultors.⁶

The site offered the Carmelites by James McMahon was on the west side of Manhattan's Central Park close to the present Museum of Natural History. This the consultors felt was too close to Blessed Sacrament Church. Faced with this refusal, Corrigan offered a compromise. The Carmelites had to help Matthew Taylor, the Blessed Sacrament's pastor, with his debt. They would pay for eleven years the interest on \$50,000 or \$2,500 a year. Moore responded that he had to consult his provincial and McMahon. Bartley accepted Corrigan's compromise.⁷

Michael Moore saw Andrew Donnelly, vicar general, about the McMahon offer and was told that it was too close to Blessed Sacrament. Moore then went to see Archbishop Corrigan who expressed sorrow at his inability to make possible the acceptance of McMahon's offer. He did offer Moore part of Saint Stephen's parish on New York's East Side along with the care of Bellevue Hospital. In response to this, McMahon said that he had made his offer but had no power to make it acceptable. When Moore reported this to Corrigan, the archbishops said the matter was ended.⁸

Early on in this venture on December 14, 1887, John Bartley wrote to his assistant general, Luigi Galli, of the denial by Archbishop Corrigan of the benefice offered the Carmelites by McMahon. This letter found its way to *Propaganda Fide* under whose jurisdiction the

⁵ *De Un Cospicuo Dono*, Rome, 1888, 3-4, Archives of the New York Province (ANYP).

⁶ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 6-8; Taylor to Corrigan, NY, Apr 9, 1889, Archives of the Archdiocese of New York, Dunwoodie (DA); Blessed Sacrament, cf. *Vestigium IV*, no. 3, 29-33.

⁸ *Di Un Cospicuo Dono*, 9-11.

United States was. There the notation, "P. Bartley asks to found a house in New York," was written on the letter.⁹

Cardinal Simeoni, the head of *Propaganda Fide*, requested from Corrigan on January 26, 1888 why he had denied this benefice offered to the Carmelites by McMahon.¹⁰ Corrigan replied on February 10, 1888. It is obvious that James McMahon was not one of the archbishop's favorite priests. In the first part of his two part letter, Corrigan very undiplomatically informed Simeoni that he was ignorant of the facts of the matter - a fatal mistake when dealing with any superior. He mentioned that his consultants felt there were too many churches in the area designated for the Carmelites and his consultants denied the request. Then in the second part marked "*riservata*," the archbishop stated that McMahon owned a hotel in Long Branch, New Jersey, that on one occasion he had been drunk in public and had used the money collected for a school in his parish to build a grand rectory. The site offered the Carmelites was one McMahon had sold but had to take back when the buyer was unable to make the mortgage. Finally, Corrigan saw "D. Giacomo," as he called him, making the offer to the Carmelites in restitution.¹¹

Bartley again wrote his general Angelo Savivni on March 14, 1888. The provincial felt the denial of the benefice was an evil matter that should be corrected. He expressed hopes of still obtaining a New York foundation.¹² The substance of the reply of Corrigan to Simeoni was forward on March 21, 1888 to the Carmelite procurator general who ordinarily handled the order's affairs in Rome.¹³

At the end of May, 1888 Michael Moore arrived in Rome via Ireland. Letters sent to Rome concerning the McMahon offer had been turned into a complaint of injustice to the Carmelites. In the files of the Carmelites archives there are a good number of written foolscaps concerning the offer and how its denial was such an injustice. They are in different hands and with the arrival of Moore in Rome his

⁹ Bartley to Galli, Dublin, Dec 14, 1887, in *Propaganda Fide* (PF), Rome, *Scrittura Originali Riferite nei Congressi, America Centrale*, 1887, 2 Semestre, # 1347, 1349.

¹⁰ Simeoni to Corrigan, Rome, Jan 26, 1888, #5825-1887, DA I-4; draft in PF, *Lettere e Decreti della S.C.*, 1888, #33, 5825.

¹¹ Corrigan to Simeoni, NY, Feb 10, 1888, PR, *Scrittura Riferite nei Congressi, America Centrale*, 1888 (48) 1 Semestre, # 137; a draft of the entire letter is in DA, I-41.

¹² Bartley to Savini, Dublin, Mar 14, 1888, AO.

¹³ *Propaganda Fide* to Procurator General of the Carmelites, Rome, M1r, 21, 1888, draft, PF, *Lettere e Decreti della S. C.* (1888), # 169-1015. June 20, 1987 then procurator general of the order informed me verbally that his files dated back only to 1927.

contributions appear. He appears to have been responsible for the final form of the entire set of notes which was printed as *Di un Cospicuo Dono* and a copy was received at *Propaganda Fide* on June 7, 1888 the same date that Moore has at the end of this treatise.

On *Propaganda's* copy is written "After the printing of this document, Mgr. Archbishop of New York sent in answer the following telegram 'New York, June 10, 1888. Consultors decided against the offer. Archbishop'."¹⁴ There are only three days between the reception of *Di un Cospicuo Dono* at *Propaganda Fide* and the reply of Corrigan. This was possible because Ella Edes, an agent of Corrigan with intimate access at *Propaganda Fide*, wired the reception of a pamphlet by Moore which "attacks not only Archbishop Corrigan but also his predecessors in the See of New York."¹⁵ An immediate reply was thus possible.

John Bartley, despite the denials for the McMahan site still hoped for a foundation in New York. He wrote of this to general Angelo Savini and his intention of going to New York to pursue them.¹⁶ Bartley went to stay with the Carmelites of the Most Pure Heart of Mary Province at Saint Cecilia's in Englewood, New Jersey. From there he wrote Archbishop Corrigan requesting an appointment.¹⁷ Bartley saw Corrigan, McMahan and the East Side site offered Moore by Corrigan. McMahan would not allow his offer to be transferred to the East Side site.¹⁸ Corrigan notified Bartley that the consultors had reaffirmed their opposition to the McMahan site. Bartley expressed to Corrigan the hope "that you will soon be able to accept a gift by which religion will be greatly benefitted."¹⁹

Visiting Corrigan again, Bartley was urged by the archbishop to accept the East Sided site. The Carmelites in Englewood did the same. Apparently Bartley decided to follow the advice he was given and sought permission from Savini. He asked the general to cable "*etiam*" or "yes" giving his permission.²⁰

¹⁴ PF, *Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, America Centrale*, 1888, 1 Semestre; Alfred Isacsson, *Carmel in New York, 1889-1906*, Maspeth, 1978, 26-30 summarizes findings about the origin and composition of *Di un Cospicuo Dono*.

¹⁵ Private Record, Mar 16, 1888, 138, DA; for Edes, cf. Bruce Kupelnick, *Encyclopedia of American Church History* Thomas Shelley, Michael Glazier, Editors, Collegeville, 1997, 478-9.

¹⁶ Bartley to Savini, Dublin, Sept 17, 1888, AO, II Hib 1.

¹⁷ Bartley to Corrigan, Englewood, Nov 17, 1888, DA, C-21.

¹⁸ Bartley to Savini, Englewood, Nov 28, 1888, AO, II Hib 1.

¹⁹ Bartley to Corrigan, Englewood, Dec 8, 1888, DA, C-21.

²⁰ Bartley to Savini, Englewood, Dec 11, Dec 17, both in AO, II Hib 1.

Savini cabled one of the positive choices as Bartley was able to write Corrigan that he had the general's permission and would pick out a site for the church within the limits set for him by the archbishop. Bartley then intended to return to Dublin and bring back with him fathers to begin the parish.²¹

John Bartley chose seven adjoining lots on the East Side, four on 28th Street and three on 29th Street and had Theodore McDonald of the Most Pure Heart of Mary Province purchase them and he, in turn, signed them over to Archbishop Corrigan. Bartley planned to get living quarters before returning to Ireland.²² While this was in progress, Corrigan applied and received from *Propaganda Fide* permission for the Carmelites to accept the parish in New York.²³

Bartley had Edward Southwell, Philip McDonnell and Michael Daly pack their bags for the trip to New York where they would build a church.²⁴ The four left from Cobh on March 21 on the *SS Germanic* and arrived in New York on March 29.²⁵ The Carmelites went to live at the Sinclair House, Broadway and 8th Street and then to a rented house on East 30th Street. They were able to purchase in November, 1889, a house on East 29th Street adjoining their church property.²⁶

While the Carmelites were organizing their parish and saying Mass at Duke's Tobacco Factory at 29th Street and First Avenue, when Archbishop's Corrigan's mail on April 5, 1889 contained two items that would be for him a source of discomfort. One was a copy of the April, 1889 issue of the *American Ecclesiastical Review* containing an article by Pius Mayer, then an assistant general of the order. Mayer stated that the presence of a Carmelite house within five miles removed any faculties given to priests for imposing the Brown Scapular. Archbishop Corrigan had obtained these faculties for his priests and through his granting the Carmelites a parish, they would disappear. Also in the mail were 8½' "by 14" typed pages of material from Michael Moore's *Di Un Cospicue Dono*. Corrigan said he would never have given the Carmelites a parish had he known of these two matters. The New York Carmelites claimed no knowledge of "Moore's dirty work." Corrigan wrote Moore on April 23 demanding a retraction of the charges he had made. Corrigan also drew up a document "Conditions

²¹ Bartley to Corrigan, Englewood, Dec 27, 1888, DA, C-21.

²² Bartley to Savini, Englewood, Feb 1, 1889, AO, II Hib 1.

²³ PF, Rescript, Jan 20, 1889, AN YP.

²⁴ Bartley to Savini, Dublin, Mar 14, 1889, AO, II Hib 1.

²⁵ Dixon, Frank *Archbishop Corrigan and the Irish Carmelites*, Maspeth, [1977], 1.

²⁶ "Members of the 28th Street Community," *Vestigium V*, no 3, 8-9.

of Foundation” in which demanded the suspension of the Scapular regulation and Moore’s retraction of his charges.²⁷

John Bartley received from Savini in Rome the information that Scapular privileges remained to the priests and churches of New York and he forwarded this to Corrigan.²⁸ Corrigan, meanwhile was gathering material to defend himself from Moore’s accusations.²⁹ He also communicated to Moore that if there was not a retraction, the fathers would have to return to Dublin.³⁰ Moore sent an apology to Corrigan but the archbishop did not consider it sufficient. Bartley apparently fed up with the intransigence of Moore, placed the entire matter in the hands of Savini.³¹

Corrigan drew up an agreement by which for the sum of one dollar, the Carmelites would agree to the retention of Scapular faculties by the New York priests. He insisted it be signed by the general. This Savini did.³²

There was a Carmelite general chapter in Rome in October, 1889. Luigi Galli was the newly elected general and probably through Bartley’s arrangements, Cardinal Simeoni of *Propaganda Fide*, Galli and three other Carmelites convened to hear the total retraction by Moore of all he had written about Corrigan. The archbishop was appeased and the first Irish foundation in New York was established on firm grounds.³³

The first mention in documents of Tarrytown is in a letter of the provincial, Joseph Hall, to Galli informing the general that Archbishop Corrigan had offered the Carmelites a parish in Tarrytown, “fifteen miles” from New York.³⁴ Hall wrote to Corrigan of the Carmelite acceptance of the parish.³⁵ The property chosen by Edward Southwell was the Cleveland Estate located on Broadway at Cleveland Place,

²⁷ Corrigan to Preston, NY, Apr 5, 1889; Conditions of Foundation, April, 1889; Private Record, 138-9, all DA.

²⁸ Savini to Bartley, Rome, cable, Apr 5, 1889; Bartley to Corrigan, Dublin, June 7, 1889, two items, DA.

²⁹ Statement, Galligan, Apr 11, 1889; Answers to Moore’s Allegations of June 7, 1888; Purchase of Property in Manhattan Square, all in DA.

³⁰ Corrigan to Moore, NY, May 27, 1889, copy, DA.

³¹ Bartley to Corrigan, Dublin, June 21, 1889, DA.

³² Agreement, Carmelites and Corrigan, Sept 14, 1889, Our Lady of the Scapular File, Chancery Office, Archdiocese of New York.

³³ Bartley to Corrigan, Rome, Oct 25, 1899; Moore to Corrigan, Rome, Oct 25, 1889 both in DA C-39.

³⁴ Hall to Galli, Dublin, Jan 17m 1895, AO, II Hjib 1.

³⁵ Hall to Corrigan, Dublin, Jan 17, 1895, AO, II Hib 1.

presently Prospect Street. It extended from Broadway, a main north south road, to the Croton Aqueduct of New York City. The price was \$25,000 but legal problems were involved in the transfer of the parcel. Southwell felt that clear title would be obtained by July, 1896. The house was purchased for the Carmelites by Thomas M. Ryan to conceal the real purchasers and prevent a rise in price because of the purchase for a religious institution.³⁶ The first Mass in the parish was offered on Rosary Sunday, 1896, in a room of the Cleveland mansion. It was on October 24, 1897, that Archbishop Corrigan traveled from the city to bless the cornerstone of the church which was dedicated on October 16 a year later. On both occasions Corrigan mentioned that besides being a parish, the foundation was to be a formation house for the Carmelites. Corrigan also said that the name of the parish, Transfiguration, was suggested by Joseph Egan, the past of neighboring Saint Teresa, North Tarrytown, now Sleepy Hollow. Egan felt the name referring to Elias at the Transfiguration fitted the past of the Carmelites.³⁷ Archbishop Corrigan asked *Propaganda Fide* for the canonical establishment of the parish at Tarrytown and the congregation asked General Galli for information. He wrote in reply that Corrigan had asked the Carmelites to establish the parish. It was open and when more priests came from Ireland, it would have regular observance. Galli seconded Corrigan's petition.³⁸

The establishment was granted.³⁹

No pastor was appointed for Transfiguration. Southwell and other Carmelites commuted from the city for many of the services. He also obtained the services of Carmelites of the Most Pure Heart of Mary Province in Englewood. When interrogated by Corrigan about a pastor, Southwell replied that personnel problems prevented an appointment. Some were unable and some were unwilling to serve and he promised to care for the parish and that it would not be neglected.⁴⁰ A month later, Southwell had Thomas I. McDermott

³⁶ Ryan to Southwell, Daly and Stone, Sept 26, 1896; Southwell, Daly and Stone to the Missionary Society of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, July 24, 1897, lib 1465, p. 366. Contrary to archdiocesan regulations, the property was purchased in the name of the Carmelites. When a loan was sought by the parish to enlarge Transfiguration School, the archdiocese brought about the transfer of the property to the parish corporation.

³⁷ Mt. Pleasant News (N. Tarrytown) Oct 21, 1898.

³⁸ Galli to *Propaganda Fide*, Rome, Sept 27, 1897, copy, AO, II Hib 1.

³⁹ Rescript, *Propaganda Fide*, Nov 2, 1897, N. 25486, ANYP.

⁴⁰ Southwell to Corrigan, Tarrytown, Oct 17, 1898, DA C-35.

residing in Tarrytown but he was retaining charge of the parish. He would leave it this way until the provincial appointed a “regular superior.”⁴¹

In 1899, Andrew Farrington was elected the Irish provincial. Because of discontent with his administration, Richard Colfer was appointed commissary general and conducted a visitation of the Irish and New York houses. The result of these was that the New York and Tarrytown houses were to be separated. New York money had been used to establish the Tarrytown parish and Colfer set up a repayment of this debt by both houses. Finally, a pastor was to be appointed. Bishop Farley told Colfer that if there was no pastor appointed, the Carmelites would have to leave.⁴² All this brought Southwell to action. Simon O’Byrne was appointed pastor and Tarrytown was separated from New York.⁴³ Eight years after its foundation, Transfiguration had a pastor and became an established house.

Edward Southwell began an enduring correspondence with Luigi Galli, the general (1889-1900). When Southwell began, he proposed the separation of Our Lady of the Scapular from the Irish province. By July, 1897, Southwell enlarged his plan to include the Tarrytown parish but wanted the two houses placed directly under the general. He tried to include the American province in this and was able to have Anastatius Kreidt promise him two men for his plan. Southwell tried unsuccessfully to gain the support of Sebastian Martinelli, the Apostolic Delegate to the United States. He was successful with Archbishop Corrigan who wrote a letter of support to Luigi Galli. After the death of Galli in 1900, Southwell enlisted the aid of Pius Mayer, assistant general. Southwell briefed Mayer on his plan and asked him to explain it to Simon Bernadini, the new general. By this time, Southwell had involved in his plan, at least in his own mind, the American Province’s parish in Englewood, New Jersey.

The term of the provincial, Michael A. O’Reilly, ended in 1909 and Edward Southwell was elected his successor. Once he had the authority of provincial, Edward Southwell never pursued his separation plan leading one to wonder if the possession of authority was behind it all.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Southwell to Corrigan, NY, Nov 20, 1898, DA G-35.

⁴² Colfer to Bernadini, Dublin, July 24, [1902], CG, Hib (1900-5).

⁴³ Southwell to Mayer, NY, Sept 18, 1902, CG, Hib (1900-5).

⁴⁴ ALFRED ISACSSON, “Edward Southwell’s Plan,” in *The Sword* 65 (Fall, 2005) 191-205.

A mission church of Transfiguration, Tarrytown was Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Elmsford, NY, just a little over a mile east of the mother church. There are no documents concerning its establishment but when Joseph Butler a Carmelite from Dublin was visiting in 1904 a church was under construction in the midst of a housing development.⁴⁵

While he was stationed at Transfiguration with Denis O'Connor, Lawrence D. Flanagan used to commute to Saint Joseph Church in Wurtsboro, NY to assist in Sunday Masses. How he traveled is not chronicled but provincial lore is that he used "milk trains" to reach the mother church or one of its four or five missions. These early morning train collected the fresh milk from farmers and brought it to the creamery. One of these missions he served was in Otisville, NY.

Edward Southwell, then the Irish provincial, received the "gift" of the parish of the Holy Name of Jesus in Otisville, NY along with the tubercular sanitarium in the village.⁴⁶ Father Basset, the Wurtsboro pastor, had written Archbishop Farley that he was caring for four churches while building another one. He had Mass in Otisville every other Sunday but if he were to care for the sanitarium, he would have Mass at Otisville just once a month.⁴⁷ This perhaps was influential in Farley asking the Carmelites to assume care of Otisville.

Carmelite ministry began in 1910 with Lawrence D. Flanagan as the first resident pastor. Though Farley had given him \$500 towards the building of a rectory, Flanagan boarded in a cottage near the church.⁴⁸ The contract between the Archdiocese of New York and the Carmelites was very explicit. It gave to the care of the Carmelites Holy Name Parish in Otisville and the missions of Our Lady of the Assumption in Bloomingburg and Saint Paul in Bullville.⁴⁹

Farley wanted to make a parish of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Elmsford, the mission of Transfiguration in Tarrytown and told Southwell he wanted to make one of his priests the pastor. Faced with this change, Southwell pressed Farley for a parish in Middletown, NY, where he could have four or five Carmelites who would care for the Otisville parish and its missions from the Middletown location. Farley granted this request.

⁴⁵ Diary of Joseph Butler (1904-7), Archives Irish Province.

⁴⁶ Southwell to Mayer, Tarrytown, Oct 25, 1910, AO, Hib (1906-21).

⁴⁷ Basset to [Farley], n.p. Feb 24, 1908, DA, I-14.

⁴⁸ Flanagan to Daly, Williamstown, Feb 22, 1957, ANYP

⁴⁹ Ferrante to Southwell, NY, Aug 5, 1911; Agreement, Farley and Southwell, July 27, 1911, ANYP.

Southwell chose a “business and industrial” section of the city for the new parish. A house with a large barn and a grist mill was bought in November, 1912. The barn was converted into a chapel where the first Mass was at 5:00 AM on Christmas morning. Peter Elias Magennis preached at the 10:00 AM Mass that day.⁵⁰ The church, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, was not built until 1925 because of the lack of funds.⁵¹

Denis O’Connor, the superior at Our Lady of the Scapular, apparently asked Richard Colfer, the pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Middletown, to search for a house for the formation of students, a goal mentioned repeatedly by Irish provincial chapters.⁵²

Colfer found a large estate with an apple orchard and pond that he felt would be suitable. The price was \$20,000 with \$500 to be paid on signing and \$7,500 to be paid at the closing leaving a mortgage of \$12,000. There were a number of problems about the land and covenants but all were cleared for the closing on August 13, 1917.⁵³ John Cardinal Farley was so pleased by the Carmelites opening a house for candidates that he sent a \$500 donation.⁵⁴

Once this house for a preparatory seminary was established, it became obvious that a novitiate, the next stage of student formation, was needed. Land adjoining the original purchase and including another lake, a house and cabin were purchased from Romer Grey, the brother of Zane Grey the author of American westerns. An addition including classrooms, dining room and chapel was added to the Grey residence.⁵⁵

The establishment of this preparatory seminary was so pleasing to John Cardinal Farley of New York that he promised the Carmelites “a beautiful parish in apart of New York with great promise for the future.” It was not to be done until after World War I.⁵⁶ Farley’s death in 1918 appeared to cancel the promise but the Irish provincial, John Cogan, came to New York to see Farley’s successor, Patrick Hayes,

⁵⁰ Unidentified newspaper clipping, Apr 26, 1913 ANYP.

⁵¹ *Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Middletown, New York*, Hackensack, 1976, 3-5.

⁵² The original purpose of Tarrytown was to be a preparatory college for students, *Church of the Transfiguration, Fortieth Anniversary, 1938*, nul. pag., ANYP; *Acta Capituli Provincialis*, June 2, 1903 and May 8, 1906, both in ACP, CG Hib (Capituli et Congregationes, 1900-64).

⁵³ O’Connor to Cortina, Mortgage, Aug 13, 1917, Lib 504, p. 295; ALFRED ISACSSON, *The Lands of Saint Albert’s Junior Seminary*, Middletown, 1973, 1-5.

⁵⁴ Farley to Southwell, NY, Sept 25, 1916, ANYP.

⁵⁵ Grey to the Missionary Society, Apr 1, 1921, lib. 609, p. 410; Dormitory Specifications, Ewing and Allen, May 28, 1923, ANYP.

⁵⁶ Magennis to Lorenzoni, NY, Apr 3, 1918, CG, Generali 2.

about the promise. He was successful and received from Hayes the promise of a parish “in the northern part of the city.”⁵⁷

Denis O’ Connor bought in 1919 land with a house on Valentine Avenue at 184th Street in the Bronx for the new parish of Saint Simon Stock.⁵⁸ The package of permissions needed for the new parish was completed by the Congregation of Religious on February 17, 1920.⁵⁹

The large house on the property was used for Mass beginning on Palm Sunday, March 28, 1920. As the church and parish buildings neared completion in 1921, Gerard O’Farrell, the pastor, duelled by mail with Archbishop Hayes over the ceremony concluding the building. In a sense, O’Farrell won because Hayes came on October 2, 1921 for a combined cornerstone laying and church dedication. Hilary Doswald, president of Saint Cyril College, Chicago, gave the address.⁶⁰

With the opening of Saint Simon Stock, the Carmelites in New York had five houses: Our Lady of the Scapular, Transfiguration, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Saint Albert’s and Saint Simon Stock. The journal for the New York Carmelite Bazaar of 1922 referred to Denis O’Connor as the “Pro. Provincial.” At the Irish chapter of that year, Peter Elias Magennis, the general, appointed Denis O’Connor the “procurator provincial” before any deliberations took place. Magennis did this because New York had the hope of becoming a province. A petition for the Congregation of Religious was drawn up but found not to be needed. There is no extant document for the establishment of the commissary and a petition was never filed at the Congregation of Religious because it was a matter for the order. The date of the commissary is September 7, 1922, the opening of the Irish chapter.⁶¹

Denis O’Connor, while he was the commissary general, was also the pastor of Our Lady of the Scapular and very active in the Irish Freedom Movement making his parish a center of Irish cultural and social activities. He was ill for some time and though there are various accounts of his malady, there is no authoritative description of its nature.

⁵⁷ Cogan to Lorenzoni, NY, Apr 23, 1919; same to same, Dublin, July 26, 1919, both in CG, Hib (1906-21).

⁵⁸ Agreement, O’Connor and Roth, Dec 4, 1919; Certificate of Incorporation, Mar 23, 1920, CONY.

⁵⁹ Establishment of St. Simon Stock, Lib. III, p. 130/1920, ANYP.

⁶⁰ O’Farrell to Dineen, Bronx, Sept 28, 1921, DA O 19a; HILARY DOSWALD, *Carmel in New York*, no place, [1921].

⁶¹ N. IV *America S. P. Eliae, erectio Commissariatus*, Mar 5, 1923, CG, Am Sti Eliae (1922-38).

⁶² ALFRED ISACSSON, *Carmel in New York, 1906-1926*, Maspeth, [1977], 199-200.

He died at Saint Vincent's Hospital on March 1, 1924.⁶² The general, Peter Elias Magennis wrote of O'Connor, "The death of O'Connor was a calamity not only for the Commissariat but especially for us in Rome because the Fathers can't help us as he did; we miss friends."⁶³

Magennis named Gerard O'Farrell the commissary general and named the commissary "The Irish-American Commissariat of Saint Simon Stock." O'Farrell resigned his pastorate of Saint Simon Stock to devote himself entirely to his new responsibilities.⁶⁴ Gerard O'Farrell had the problem of kidney stones that required surgery for its alleviation. His responsibilities especially construction at Saint Simon Stock inclined him to postpone his operation. He finally went to the hospital and had the operation but died afterwards on June 15, 1926 of complications after the surgery.⁶⁵

The meeting of the consultors after the death of O'Farrell was postponed a number of times but when it was finally held, Lawrence D. Flanagan tied with Robert Power then in Australia but Flanagan was appointed to the position.⁶⁶

In a letter of November 14, 1930, to the general, Peter Elis Magennis, Flanagan dealt with a number of matters and in between these Flanagan requested that his commissariat be established as a province. He mentioned in his favor that this was a goal also of Magennis.⁶⁷ A petition to the Sacred Congregation of Religious was drawn up with this request. The response was positive and with this faculty, the order established the Province of Saint Elias.⁶⁸ A child of Ireland was born.

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⁶³ Magennis to Franco, NY, [Aug 11, 1924], CG, Generali 2.

⁶⁴ Decree, E. Magennis, Rome, Nov 3, 1924; unidentified clippings, St. Simon Stock scrapbook, both ANYP.

⁶⁵ *The New York Times* (June 16, 1926) 25; (June 17, 1926) 23.

⁶⁶ Consultors Minutes, Nov 22, 1926; Decree, E. Magennis, Sept 3, 1926, both in ANYP.

⁶⁷ Flanagan to Magennis, Bronx, Nov 14, 1930, copy, ANYP.

⁶⁸ Sacred Congregation of Religious, Mar 24, 1931, 1319/31; Decree, Franco, VG, Mar 31, 1931, copy ANYP.