

2019-7

**The Brothers of Holy Cross**

**St. Columbkille School, Chicago, Illinois 1886-97:**

**Early Educators of Edward F. Hoban,**

**Archbishop of Cleveland, Ohio (1945-1966)**

**by**

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In 1951 Monsignor Richard Augustine Dowed (1877-1957), pastor of the Church of the Annunciation, Akron, OH for 49 years (1907-1956) convinced Archbishop Edward Francis Hoban (1878-1966), Bishop of Cleveland from 1945 until his death in 1966, that there was a need for a Catholic boys high school in Akron to educate the sons of blue collar families who worked in factories such as Goodyear and Firestone. It would be a school for men taught by men.

Hoban agreed to build the school as long as it would be staffed by the Brothers of Holy Cross. Archbishop Hoban High School would be the third Catholic high school staffed by the Brothers established by Hoban in the Cleveland Diocese. The first (1946) was Gilmour Academy in Gates Mills; the second (1949) was St. Edward High School in Lakewood, and the third (1953) was Archbishop Hoban High School in Akron. Hoban's enthusiasm for the Brothers of Holy Cross began in 1886 when he was nine years old and attended the new parish school at St. Columbkille in Chicago, IL. Staffed by the Brothers of Holy Cross between 1886 - 1897, the Archbishop graduated in 1896, going on to St. Ignatius College (now St. Ignatius College Preparatory High School) in Chicago (**Slide 1**). He maintained fond memories of St. Columbkille and the Brothers for the remainder of his life. Specifically, he was endeared to Brother Marcellus (William) Kelly, C.S.C. (1860-1935) who was his favorite teacher.

Edward Francis Hoban was born in Chicago on North Noble Street (**Slide 2**) in 1878 nine years before the founding of St. Columbkille School (**Slide 3**) to William and Bridget Hoban. The parish was established in 1856, and the school was started in 1868 by Father Thomas Burke, the fourth pastor, who was widely known throughout Chicago as "Good Father Tom." The parish, and later the school, were situated on Paulina Street and West Grand Avenue, originally Owen Street and later Indiana Street, and began as a mission of St. Patrick's Parish. Initially, the

school was for girls and staffed by The Daughters of St. Vincent. In 1888 a boys' division was started staffed by the Brothers of Holy Cross (*Diamond Jubilee Program*, 1934).

Brother Marcellus Kelly, Hoban's favorite teacher, entered St. Joseph Novitiate in 1876 when he was 16. Born in Watertown, Wisconsin to a pioneer family, it was "[d]uring his student days at Sacred Heart College [that] he [Marcellus] became acquainted with the Brothers" (Association of St. Joseph, July, 1935). Upon the completion of his novitiate year his first teaching assignment was at St. Philomena School in Cincinnati. Over the next 50 years, he would teach at the University of Notre Dame in the Preparatory Department and became a prefect in Carroll Hall, then at Holy Trinity school in Chicago, then in New Orleans and at St. Columbkille for one year 1894-95. In 1912 he was the principal and English literature teacher at Cathedral Boys' School in Fort Wayne. The faculty included three Holy Cross legends: Brothers Bernard Gervase, C.S.C., Ephrem O'Dwyer, C.S.C., and Nicholas Ochs, C.S.C. Under Superior General Father Gilbert Français, C.S.C. (1893-1926) he served as an assistant general and was repeatedly elected by the Brothers to represent them in general chapters. Brother Marcellus was appointed the first superior of the house of studies, Dujarié Hall, in 1895 during his only year at St. Columbkille. Sometime during the early 1930s, ill health sent him to the Community Infirmary where in 1934 he celebrated his golden jubilee. Marcellus Kelly died in July of 1935.

For a Brother who spent nearly 50 years as a classroom teacher, and as the first superior of the Brothers' house of studies, and an assistant superior general, there is scant information about his impact upon his many years of teaching. He is mentioned in the *General Matricule* compiled by Brother Bernard Gervase, C.S.C. yet his *Interrogatories for Postulants* form is missing as are so many for other Brothers from the last five decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He is given but a few hundred words in Brother Aiden O'Reilly's *Extracts*, most regarding the

celebration of his golden jubilee the year prior to his death in 1935. Even though he served a single year at St. Columbkille when Hoban was 17, he obviously left his mark as he is mentioned twice in the *Extracts* as the teacher of “the Bishop of Rockford, Most Rev. Edward Hoban, D. D”. **(Slide 4)**

Although I have not been able to find information about the curriculum for the students at St. Columbkille, Edward Hoban’s outstanding academic career after leaving the school, demonstrates that it must have been extremely comprehensive. Hoban was 17 when Brother Marcellus had him in class. That year there were 640 students enrolled, so each of the nine Brothers taught a class of 70 to 72 students. When Hoban left St. Columbkille in 1896, he was accepted at St. Ignatius College. The 1896-97 *Catalogue of St. Ignatius College* records that Edward Hoban received a gold medal for highest average in the class. He received the First Premium in Evidences of Religion, Latin, Greek, English and History, the Second Premium in Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry, the award for Good Conduct, and for the Annual Examination Honor Roll Standard based on a possible score of 100 points in Poetry, he received 94/100. In 1897, Hoban joined the Chrysostomian Debating Society and received honorable mention for Elocution and a gold medal for Excellence in Rhetoric, a First Premium in Evidences of Religion, Latin, Greek, Original Composition, Precepts of Rhetoric, Mathematics and Physics, the Good Conduct award and for the Annual Examination Honor Roll Standard based on a maximum score of 100 points in Rhetoric, he received 93/100. It is apparent that he was well prepared for college not only by Brother Marcellus but by all his Brother teachers beginning in 1888.

Posted in the Provincial Archives for 1892 is Brother Marcellus’ appointment as superior of St. Pius School in Chicago. In 1895, Brother Marcellus is listed in *Sorin’s Chronicles* among

the personnel at St. Columbkille along with Brother Marcellinus, the superior and a legendary Holy Cross educator, and Brothers Wigbert, Just, Pastor, Cassian, Joachim, Maurillius and Columban. Individual class sizes are not given, but the *Chronicles* record a student body of 640 students with nine Brother teachers, so class sizes averaged 71 students. When St. Columbkille school opened on September 4, 1886, the exact number of students showing up was 456.

The founding principal and superior was Brother Urban (Andrew) McKeon, C.S.C., who served with Brothers Tobias, Theodore, Amandus, Anselm, Francis Assisi and Bertram. Brother Amandus (James) Fitzgerald was still on staff in 1895. Fr. William Corby, C.S.C., the famous Civil War chaplain and two-time president of the University of Notre Dame and Provincial in 1886, reported that “The house is in good order, [the] pastor [Rev. Thomas Burke] (**Slide 5**) will be pleased” (*Aiden’s Extracts*).

In an 1886 issue of the Notre Dame *Scholastic*, appears the article “St. Paulina’s School, Chicago”. The title records a misnomer as it appears to name the school as St. Paulina. Paulina is the name of the street where the church and school are still located. There is no clear indication of who wrote the article as its author is listed as a generic “Vistor”. The record of this visit is the longest and most complete physical description of the school’s foundation year.

The writer of this recently had occasion to visit Chicago and, taking a deep interest in schools, called at St. Columbkille’s, corner of Paulina and Indiana Streets; there he found seven Brothers—Brother Urban, C.S.C., Superior—having under their charge some five hundred children, from the wee toddler of four up to the (in his [Brother Urban’s ?] own mind) important young men of eighteen. The building is one of the finest of the kind in the city; four stories high, of pressed brick, and stands back some fifty feet from the street, the space in front being used as a playground for the children. In the basement, to

the left, is a large room used as a play-hall during the stormy weather; to the right is a room used for coal, back of which is the boiler room. The building may be heated by steam or hot air as may be needed, thus doing away with stoves and the consequent danger therefrom; ventilation, too, is well attended to, as fresh air is introduced directly from the outside into each room. The class-rooms are large and well lighted, there being six windows in each; and each pupil—of whom each room can accommodate seventy-two—has a desk for himself. Taken together, it is one of the most complete schools the writer has ever had the pleasure of visiting, and the Brothers are doing a vast amount of good, and trying to keep up the reputation they have already earned, of being one of the very best teaching bodies in the United States. One feature of this school that is deserving of special mention, and it is this: the boys who are large enough and who have voices are trained to sing at Benediction; and truly was the writer edified and astonished when he heard them sing for the first time; they are under the direction of Brother Tobias, and they are a credit to him and the school. The school was built by Rev. Thomas Burke, one of the oldest and most zealous priests of the Archdiocese; and the fact of there being not a cent of debt on it but exemplifies his ability and zeal.

The “Visitor” offers more than effusive praise for the school and specifically, the Brothers—he absolutely gushes with pride. Who is this Visitor? Although I have found no source that specifically identifies him, my best hunch is that it is Father William Corby, C.S.C., the Provincial. There is a single quote in *Aiden’s Extracts*, “The house is in good order, pastor will be pleased,” and it is attributed to William Corby. There is also more praise for the choir’s singing at Benediction than, perhaps, a casual lay visitor from Notre Dame would afford.

Perhaps, Corby's visit provided a time when the Provincial might have presided at Benediction. There is no evidence of this, yet my assumption is that this is what happened.

The article provides the name of the superior/principal, the founding pastor of the school, the physical description of one of "the most complete schools the writer had the pleasure of visiting in Chicago", the age-range of the students from wee to important, and that there were 72 desks in each classroom. These desks were most likely bolted to the floor. With a starting enrollment of approximately 500 students and seven Brothers, each Brother had between 68 and 70 students in a room. One can only imagine what crowd control was like in a classroom of 72 students. The prep time and the evaluation of homework must have taken many hours during community class preparation evenings.

When Brother Urban died in 1935, he was a much revered member of the Congregation as described in 1908 in this *Scholastic* article.

There is probably no city or important town in the United States which does not hold warm friends of the devoted Brother whose courtesy has committed him to the respect of all who have met him. Not in vain was he named Urban, for urbanity was his characteristic. No hour too late, and no hour too early for him to serve the chance visitor or to dispense to the public the hospitality of the famous University (42:26).

In another *Scholastic* article he is described as "refined and gentle [of] manner, the reflection of a beautiful soul" (42:319. 1908). And in 1912, Brother Gilbert (James) Horton is quoted in the Notre Dame *Alumnus*. "No man ever met Brother Urban who could ever forget him. Nature and grace combined to create in him a subtle and unusual charm. Invested with a natural dignity of attractive personal appearance, he went his way through the world, offending none, serving all, and leaving golden memories in the hearts of those who met him."

Born in 1835 in Ireland, Andrew McKeon entered Holy Cross in 1861. Immediately after this novitiate he became a teacher in the Senior Department at Notre Dame. There is no evidence that justifies that he had sufficient educational preparation to enter a classroom at the age of 26. Yet he continued to teach at Notre Dame until 1868 when he became the superior and principal of Immaculate Conception school in Springfield, Illinois.

Brother Urban returned to the University of Notre Dame remaining there for the next ten years. From 1884-88, he served in Camden, New Jersey, and there is no significant information about that time period. After his time at St. Columbkille, in 1890, he returned to Notre Dame to spend the rest of his active years as its guest master.

Brother Gabriel (Bernard) Smith or (Smyth), C.S.C. (**Slide 6**) was appointed the second director of St. Columbkille in 1890. I have uncovered very little information about this Brother. He is not included in *Aiden's Extracts*. His *Interrogatory of Postulate* form is dated August 17, 1867, and records very brief information. He was born in 1833 in Ireland with no indication of when he came to the States. While in Ireland, he was a storekeeper who had a "common education". He received the habit in 1866. During his interview for the postulancy, he told Fr. Louis L'Etourneau, C.S.C., that he was called to the Congregation because of his acquaintance with an F. Larkins, who most likely was a priest either in Ireland or a CSC in the states. He describes his temperament as mild and agrees that he will be always obedient. I have found nothing that indicates that this Brother was qualified to teach let alone be the director of a school especially one that was so well established as the one directed by his predecessor Brother Urban. He might have been elected to the 1886 General Chapter.

Brother Marcellinus (Thomas) Kinsella, C.S.C. (**Slide 7**) was the third and final director of St. Columbkille taking over in 1893 and staying until the Brothers withdrew at the end of the

1897 term. Among the three directors, Marcellinus Kinsella was the shining star. He was a true jack of all trades and, in his case, the master of all of them.

In a biographical sketch written by Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer, C.S.C. (1888-1978) who served on the founding faculty with Brother Marcellinus in Fort Wayne in 1909, he contends that so confident were the superiors at the time in the abilities of Brother Marcellinus that they appointed him the first principal of the first Brothers' high school. Brother Ephrem goes on to describe his abilities.

[Marcellinus] was years ahead of John Dewey in 'learning through doing'" [as] his philosophy of education. In general his principles came from what he learned through practice. Once a beginning teacher asked him for some hints on teaching, and he simply replied: "I don't like to give any; you must build according to your personality. But if you insist, then I would say that I have found two rules; don't look for the pound of flesh; and if you are in a fight, stay in till you finish it".

Brother Ephrem continues: "He was a man that boys never forget, for he had everything to make him their ideal." And about his time at St. Columbkille, O'Dwyer is effusive with praise:

He was Superior of St. Columbkille's...in the nineties. Five hundred lively youngsters held him in awe, and even the nine or ten Brothers...had likewise a wholesome respect for him. Father Thomas Burke...pastor in those days...made sure that [he] came year after year, threatening the Holy Cross Provincial with the direst penalties if he even thought about assigning his head-man to some other school. Yes, he would even forget his priestly dignity and throw the venerable Father Corby into St. Joseph Lake. Needless to say Brother Marcellinus went back to Chicago. Among those who were assisted by his academic and social influence were many who later became bishops, priests, teachers,

judges, lawyers, doctors, business executives. ...One of his former students once remarked: 'I have forgotten much of what I learned at Saint Columbkille's, but the impression Brother Marcellinus, the principal, made on me I shall never forget'.

Finally, Ephrem describes what was found in his room at Notre Dame after his death in 1914.

"A search of his room revealed only his beads, a Community manual of prayers, a copy of the *Imitation of Christ*, some holy pictures that he used as bookmarks, and a chipped statue of St. Joseph."

Helen May Irwin, a reporter for the *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*, wrote on July 30, 1914 upon the death of Marcellinus that he was:

one of the ablest and best known teaching Brothers of the Congregation of Holy Cross, died Wednesday morning at Notre Dame. To scores of Fort Wayne friends and particularly the students of Central Catholic High School, the announcement of his demise will be received with profound regret.

While Marcellinus was at the University of Notre before going to Chicago, he held many academic and non academic positons. In a 1894 issue of the *Scholastic* there appears this announcement.

Brother Marcellinus, who for years was head of the Commercial Department at Notre Dame, and who is now director of St. Columbkille's School, Chicago, celebrated on last Monday, (19th) the Silver Jubilee of his entrance into the Congregation of Holy Cross. At St. Columbkille's, Chicago, he left behind him, not only golden memories, but a superb company of young men, many of them priests, to cherish his name. For 25 years he has been identified with the cause of education, and few instructors have met with greater success...

Brother Marcellinus did not leave St. Columbkille in 1894 as the article suggests—he was assigned in 1893 and remained there until the end of the 1896-97 school year.

In 1914, upon his death, a final testimony to his legacy as teacher and brother to many is published by Helen Irwin in the *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*.

Shortly prior to the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary commencement at the University of Notre Dame this year, Brother Marcellinus was stricken with apoplexy of the brain and since that time his condition had been critical. For the past week his death had been hourly expected; the final summons came on Wednesday when he passed away at the Community House, where he had been making his home for a year....Owing to his long service as a teacher, over forty years, Brother Marcellinus remained at Notre Dame and during the past year since his retirement from Fort Wayne taught classes in the Commercial Department. His duties were not heavy and he appeared in his usual health until stricken in June. The beloved teacher was about 67 years of age and throughout his long career in the classroom was eminently successful in his activities. He taught at practically all the higher educational institutions of the Congregation of Holy Cross and was a religious of keen intellectual capacity and administrative ability. A number of Chicago's leading business and professional men were students of Brother Marcellinus and so popular was he with the Chicago Notre Dame Alumni that no reunion was deemed complete unless he was in attendance. His death is a distinct loss to the great Community of which he was a devoted and exemplary member. He was a member of the General Chapter of the Holy Cross Order and participated in all the deliberations of that body for many years.

And in the sermon delivered by Father Patrick J. Carroll, C.S.C. at his funeral, Carroll said: “Apart from his general scholastic equipment, Brother Marcellinus had a special gift of

fluent and distinguished speech, which, united to his exquisite sense and faculty of humor, made him a special favorite at alumni meetings and indeed wherever men had gathered. In every way a manly man.”

The number of Brothers who served at St. Columbkille between 1886--1897 is twenty-five (Figure 1). Along with the three directors (Brothers Urban, Gabriel and Marcellinus), eleven other Brothers died in the Congregation: Brothers Marcellus, Simeon, Hubert, Hugh, Francis de Sales, Lucian, Just, Albert, Tobias, Raymond and Francis Assisi. Thirteen of these men are buried at Holy Cross Cemetery on the campus of the University of Notre Dame, and Brother Hubert Clark is buried in Portland, Oregon. The other eleven Brothers who served at the school either immediately after their novitiate year or the following year all would leave the community by 1898. Brothers Pastor, Columban, Bertram, Anselm, Amandus, Theodore, Maurillius, Justin, Wigbert, Kiran and Finbarr. Brother Amandus (James) Fitzpatrick apparently left without a formal dispensation. In an 1895 letter from Brother Marcellinus to Father Sorin, he writes in large flourishing cursive: “The one called Amandus has wandered off!” Brother Amandus was assigned in 1888 two years after his novitiate year and was on staff at Columbkille for seven years, the longest term of any of the men.

For eleven years the Brothers of Holy Cross staffed St. Columbkille School. The 25 Brothers were called upon to work tirelessly for the sons of the Chicago Catholic families who entrusted them to Brothers like Urban, Gabriel, Marcellinus and Marcellus. If Edward Hoban’s stellar college academic career is characteristic of just 10% of the Columkille graduates, then these former students were worthily served by the Brothers of Holy Cross. I have not found any reliable evidence as to why the Brothers withdrew from the school at the end of the 1896-97 school year. Those who did not leave the Congregation, were reassigned to a number of

locations. Immediately after the Brothers left, they were replaced in the boy's division by the Sisters of Providence who replaced the Daughters of St. Vincent sometime before the Brothers arrived in 1888 and were still staffing the school in the late 1950s. Brother Marcellinus returned to the University of Notre Dame, continued to teach in the Commercial Department there, and in 1909 was appointed as the principal of Central Catholic High School in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

**Figure 1**

<b>Given Name</b>	<b>Religious Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Interrogatory</b>	<b>Reception</b>	<b>Death</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Buried</b>	<b>Aidan</b>	<b>Aidan</b>
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		Year	Responses	of Habit				Bio	No Bio
Bush, John	Simeon	1852	no	1877	12/22/1906	54	Notre Dame		X
Clark, James F.	Hugh	1861	yes	1884	6/25/1928	67	Notre Dame	X	
Cullinan, Robert	Francis de Sales	1868	no	1887	1/13/1948	79	Notre Dame		X
Dearing, Anthony	Lucian	1848	no	1867	8/27/1909	60	Notre Dame	X	
Garrett, Robert	Just	1861	yes	1894	6/30/1915	53	Notre Dame		X
Kelly, William	Marcellus	1860	no	1894	5/6/1935	75	Notre Dame	X	
Kinsella, Thomas	Marcellinus	1847	yes	1872	7/29/1914	67	Notre Dame	X	
Kelly, Joseph	Albert	1846	yes	1883	6/8/1913	67	Notre Dame		X
McKeon, Andrew	Urban	1835	no	1861	7/5/1912	77	Notre Dame	X	
Nolan, Thomas	Hugh	1852	yes	1887	11/19/1924	59	Portland		X
O'Brian, Thomas	Tobias	1859	no	1884	5/22/1930	70	Notre Dame	X	
Ott, Willis	Raymond	1877	yes	1899	9/14/1943	65	Notre Dame	X	
Reynolds, John	Francis Assisi	1838	no	1863	12/5/1923	75	Notre Dame		X
Smyth, Bernard	Gabriel	1833	yes	1866	2/18/1894	60	Notre Dame		X

Given Name	Religious Name				Age		Withdrew
James Barrett	Pastor	1874	yes	1892	18		1898
Dempsey, Patrick	Columban	1873	yes	1888	15		1901
Bieg, Robert	Bertram	1868	yes	1883?	25		?
Fendall, George	Anselm	1868	yes	1889	21		1891 ?
Fitzgerald, James	Amandus	?	no	1886			?
Gallivan Timothy	Theodore	?	no	1884			1893
McDermott, Francis	Maurillius	?	yes	1893			1895
McKeon, William M.	Justin	1874	yes	1890	16		1893
Meyerhofer, John	Wigbert	?	no	1881			1893
Sherman, Martin	Kieran	1869	yes	1887	18		1893
Walsh, Alfred	Finbarr	1874	yes	1890	16		?

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