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GROWING WITH THE PRIMATIAL SEE

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In 1789 the Constitution of the United States became operative. In April George Washington was inaugurated as president. On November 6, John Carroll, originally a Jesuit, was made the first bishop of Baltimore, or as an unnamed source said - the entire hierarchy of the United States, and on November 8, 1808 he was created archbishop. In that sense only Baltimore became the primatial, the first see, in the United States. A decree of Propaganda of July 19, 1858 gave Baltimore the "prerogative of place," that is, the archbishop took precedence over all archbishops of the United States in Councils and gatherings of the hierarchy.

In 1859, three years after the Sisters opened St. Joseph's Male Orphan Asylum in Washington, which until the 1940s was part of the diocese of Baltimore, four other Sisters were sent to St. Patrick's in Baltimore. There they ministered until the last part of the twentieth century when the pastor summarily closed the school in 1987. The most enduring part of their work was done in the school that over the years had a variety of names, but which is generally known as St. Patrick's.

A part of their work for one hundred years, however, was the care of orphans at St. Patrick's Orphanage and at Dolan Aid. There were also a variety of other places in the city where they also served. Because St. Patrick's School, although often small and always poor, was the most enduring it forms the framework for the other places and is the topic of this paper.

The history of the institution, however, predates the arrival of Holy Cross in the East. St. Patrick's is the second oldest parish in Baltimore; only the old pro-cathedral of St. Peter, two miles away, is older. St. Patrick's was founded in 1792 in a rented, third-story unplastered room on the northeast corner of present Bond and Fleet Streets on Fell's Point, that section of Baltimore where ships discharged their immigrant passengers. The Point became a haven at first for emigre Catholics during the French Revolution, for Haitian plantation owners fleeing the late revolt in that French colony, and considerably later for the Irish fleeing the famine.¹ The parish worshiped in three locations before moving a bit further inland to the corner of Broadway (then Market Street) and Bank in 1807. At the time of its dedication, it was considered the "handsomest church" in the city. All locations, however, were still on the Point and immigrants continued to come in ever increasing numbers.

The absence of any public or parochial education deprived the children of these poor immigrants of even the most elementary education.² Resolving to remedy the situation, the Reverend John Francis Moranville, the French emigre pastor, in June of 1815 established St. Patrick's Free School in a rented house across Broadway from the Church. Within a month he had enrolled approximately fifty pupils, all girls. The school was not restricted to Catholics. It was supported by a group of charitable ladies organized into St. Patrick's Benevolent Society and was taught by two lay women. The curriculum included algebra, geometry and bookkeeping.³ In the same year, a free school for boys was founded in the old church building on Apple Alley, the southwest corner of present Eastern Avenue and Bethel Street.⁴

St. Patrick's, therefore, was Maryland's first public (that is, free) and first parochial school.⁵ Still taught by lay women, the girls' school was moved from Broadway to Apple Alley and back again in 1840 to a two-story building next to the rectory on Broadway. By that time the boy's school had become a few rooms at the rear of the sacristy.⁶

The year after the girls' school was moved back to Broadway, the Reverend James Dolan became the pastor at St. Patrick's. A native of Ireland, he arrived in Baltimore via New Orleans, Texas and Philadelphia. He had been ordained in December, 1840, and was sent immediately to St. Patrick's as assistant and became the pastor himself the following February. He was 27 years of age and had been in the United States not quite seven years.⁷ Because the school at St. Patrick's had been for girls only, he built a separate school building for the boys on Bank Street behind the church. He proposed to maintain these parochial schools as long as there were funds in the possession of the Church, and should they fail, as long as he could beg. In 1846 he brought the Brothers of St. Patrick to teach the boys, but they stayed only until 1852 after which there is no more mention of them.⁸ The girls were still taught by lay women. Father Dolan tried to make the boys' school self-supporting by making it a "pay school", or as he called it, a "select school."

It is for his work with orphans, however, that Father Dolan is best remembered. The year 1847 marked the beginning of the great Irish immigration. Scores of their number were buried at sea; others reached America as corpses and were buried in St. Patrick's Cemetery. Many of the people who came to help

Father Dolan minister to the sick fell victims to the fever. Thus within a year, Father Dolan found himself the sole refuge of about 40 orphans. A friend provided money with which he bought the home for the orphans in 1847.⁹ That house on Broadway still stands. In time it became the convent for the Sisters and finally part of the parochial school.

As early as September of 1849, Father Dolan wrote to Father Sorin offering to Holy Cross the care of the Orphans' Home. The administration at Notre Dame, however, declined to accept the establishment until it could be "offered entirely free from past contracted encumbrances."¹⁰ Again in the summer of 1858, Father Dolan asked Father Sorin to "aid in establishing. . . a good solid orphans' home - one to benefit the boys and to [bring] honor to the Church." He had visited the Sister's school in Philadelphia and was pleased with it. He would be glad, he said, to have the Sisters also to take charge of his girls' school.¹¹ Sorin refused. Dolan kept pleading. A beginning could be made, he thought, with a priest, two professed brothers and two Sisters. "I have no doubt," he continued, "but this establishment will be (should you take it) the parent home of your society in America."¹²

This plea was answered. The agreement stipulated that Sorin was to receive \$150 a year for each brother but \$100 for each Sister as well as traveling expenses paid in advance. Father Dolan also agreed to "support them," that is, pay all household expenses and "see them properly attended in their religious duties." All profits from the sale of books were to go to the Sisters.¹³ In the summer of 1859, three brothers and four Sisters were sent to St. Patrick's. Early in September, the brothers opened their school and also had charge of the older orphan boys in that

building on Broadway known as the Orphans' Home. On September 21, the Sisters began to teach in the Free School for Females and also opened around the corner on Gough Street a select school which took its name from the parish, calling itself St. Patrick's Academy. They remained at this location until 1870. Two women paid by Father Dolan did the cooking and washing for the Sisters, brothers and orphans. Food and laundry were even sent to the orphans employed on the farm near Darby Park.¹⁴ (Note how early it was education that was wanted from the Sisters, not ancillary duties.) Those brothers stayed until 1863. The Sisters stayed until 1987.

They had scarcely become settled when the Civil War began. Although there is no written account of those days, it must have been there - as well as at St. Joseph's in Washington - that the Civil War had the greatest effect on the everyday life of Holy Cross. Life at St. Patrick's was changed in many ways by the War and even more by the agitation aroused by the visit of Charles Moreau and rumblings of separation from France. It was probably the introduction of the draft which caused the brothers' withdrawal in 1863.

The annual Exhibition, which in those early years substituted for Commencement exercises, was omitted as early as 1861 because of the War - and the unsettled condition of the city. (Remember that Maryland was a border state and the railway gate to Washington. Its state song even speaks of the "patriotic gore" that stained the "streets of Baltimore.") In 1863 the pastor at St. Patrick's asked that classes continue until July 15. So intent was he on keeping his Sisters at peace and at his school, that when the Sisters were withdrawn from Philadelphia midway through the War, he retained the mail so that they would know nothing of

the difficulties between Notre Dame and Le Mans. When a petition for separation from France was circulated, the confessor advised the Sisters not to sign it.¹⁵

In January, 1870, Father Dolan died. His legacy at St. Patrick's and Dolan Aid continued. When Mother Angela made the visitation soon after his death, it was decided that the Sisters would do better if they gave up the salary and instead collected from the pupils. The new pastor, Father Gaitley, readily agreed.¹⁶ It was that year, too, that the select school was moved around the corner from its second location on Bank Street, which bounded the church on the south, to what had been the Orphans' Home on Broadway which had been renovated, repaired¹⁷ and expanded so that it soon required four teachers and a music teacher.¹⁸ The name was changed officially to Academy of the Holy Cross.¹⁹ The Catholic Directory, however, had called it by that name even as early as 1860.²⁰ At this time, too, the Sisters taught a class for small boys.

When plans began in 1872 for the establishment and building of St. Catherine's Normal Institute on Arlington, the Academy on Broadway suffered considerably. The superior's time was occupied by finding a location for the proposed school, overseeing the erection of the building and raising funds for it. The Sisters even talked about changing some of the "first class pupils" from St. Patrick's to the new school. As a result a number of girls transferred to other schools in the city. One bright spot in this process of "musical chairs" was that Sister Emerentiana (Nowlan) was sent to the Academy in 1870, became principal in 1875 - and remained there, except for a brief interlude, until she was sent to Saint Mary's as archivist in 1892. The orphanage that had been moved to Bank Street was then

replaced by a new building on Gough Street - and in time became Dolan Aid. Two Sisters ate and slept in the new building on Gough but did not form a separate religious community.

St. Patrick's was never a wealthy mission. In the beginning there were fewer comforts than at the time it closed. The Sisters were crowded into one small sleeping apartment with windows on only one side immediately over the kitchen where they nearly roasted in the summer and froze in the winter. There were no bathrooms, closets, furnaces, nor running water in the house. Visiting Sisters often wondered at the happiness and contentment of these Sisters living between the "two bricks," as the place was aptly characterized by Sister Emily (Rivard), but the "spiritual advantages more than counterbalanced the lack of temporal ease."²¹ They held an entertainment in the middle of each year to provide money for the purchase of premiums. (These premiums were prizes given at each "commencement" and were usually some sort of book. In those years diplomas did not seem to be awarded but gold medals were given in their stead - at least in the girls' schools.) The exhibitions, which were held each year at what we would call commencement, required admission by ticket. (At places like Saint Mary's no admission was charged and lemonade was likely to be served the guests.) A program dated 1882 survives for such an exhibition at St. Patrick's, dated 1882. It was for "The Little Boys School," was held at nine thirty in the morning in St. Patrick's Hall and featured such selections as: "Clap-clap, Hurrah," "Why Did the Angels Take Mamma Away?" "The Lacrymose Men", "When I Was a Lad."

In 1887 the old two-story parochial school between the rectory and the old school (the original orphanage) was torn down and a new school erected. It had a well ventilated dormitory, bathroom, study hall, classroom, and "many such needed comforts."²² At this time the academy was closed at the request of the pastor, Father Gaitley; and the two schools, the select and the free, were united as a graded school called St. Patrick's Female School.²³ The pastor was to provide the fuel but the Sisters were to collect the tuition. The merger created an unexpected difficulty. Although the same Sisters were retained, some students left for other academies in the city because at this new place they had to come "into contact with the rougher class who could not be excluded."²⁴ The Sisters "by great efforts" succeeded in keeping most of the students and it grew sufficiently to warrant the addition of a third floor in 1895.²⁵ In 1902, this school was called St. Patrick's School for the first time although only girls were still admitted.²⁶

In the meantime, Father Gaitley had built the boy's school behind the church and in the next year invited the Xaverian Brothers to staff it. They remained until 1960.

The twentieth century brought a number of changes. The elaborate closings were discontinued in 1907 at the pastor's request.²⁷ After the First World War some classes in the eighth grade were canceled and girls found it more difficult to compete for scholarships offered by St. Catherine's Normal Institute and other high schools in the city. In 1946, the Sisters began to teach the first grade boys of St. Patrick's at the request of the pastor and the Xaverian Brothers. The enrollment that

year reached 440. The following fall there were 147 first graders and some had to be refused despite the creation of three sections.²⁸ By 1960, the Sisters were also teaching grades two, three and four. At the end of that year, the Brothers withdrew completely from the boys' school and, thereafter, the boys joined the girls in the school on Broadway, and their old school building on Bank Street became a parish hall. The Sisters who had been living in the old Orphans' Home, originally built in 1847, moved to the former convent of the Brothers on Bank Street. The Orphans' Home became part of the parish school.

Over the years, the neighborhood changed drastically. Composed for many decades of the descendants of immigrants who had risen to positions of financial independence and comfort, the parish was thought to be the most influential and conservative in the city of Baltimore. In the decades preceding the Second World War, a distinctly Polish population came to replace the Irish. Many students no longer spoke English at home and poverty brought serious handicaps. From this predominantly white, lower-middle class neighborhood of second or third generation immigrants passionately devoted to St Pat's, it became almost half black with a noticeable addition of Asians, especially Vietnamese. Yet some of the old families lingered who cared deeply about the parish and its well-being. In 1981, for instance, the parish took the lead in the fight to close a newly opened pornographic movie house two doors away from the school on Broadway. In fact children who took the bus home from school had to wait for it in front of the theater. The Sisters solicited the prayers of the entire Congregation for the success of the effort to close

the place. They joined the picket lines along with parishioners and other concerned people. Sisters of the Holy Cross across the country began a campaign of prayer, and five months after it opened the theater closed in December of 1981.²⁹

Life at the school and convent continue its ordinary pace. The Sisters were very much a part of the neighborhood and parish communities. The archives narrative reflected a positive outlook. The Sisters welcomed visitors who enjoyed their visits on Bank Street - even though the frosted windows on the first floor were disconcerting but necessary considering the nature of the neighborhood.

On August 16, 1983, an acetylene torch used by workmen repairing the roof of the church accidentally destroyed the roof and much of the interior of the building. The loss was estimated near three million dollars. Civic and religious leaders offered help.

In many ways, however, the fire was the straw that began to break the school. The pastor, Father Blair Raum, circulated a flyer. It was an optimistic statement: "We want you [the parishioners] to know we are more committed than ever to accept the challenge of rebuilding Saint Patrick's Church - the physical structure as well as our parishioners by continuing to provide services that will build the Christian community." Beginning the very next morning, daily Mass was celebrated in the convent community room. Sunday Masses and funerals used the Parish Hall, the old boys' school on Bank Street between the Church and the convent. The parish celebration of St. Patrick's Day was held at the Recreation Pier on Fell's Point. One year when the pastor was hospitalized for several weeks, Sister Mary

Elizabeth (Boyle) conducted daily Communion services in the community room. Father was still providing services for the Christian community of the parish. Work on the church continued. For two weekends in June of 1986 the annual Parish Carnival for the benefit of the school was held with Sister Francis Helene working every evening and the other two contributing their time and whatever energy they had.

The Church was rededicated at the five o'clock liturgy on Saturday, October fourth. Three eighth-grade boys carried in the procession a brass covered lectionary, the gift of the school. Afterward the Sisters served a supper to the Sisters of the Holy Cross who attended and to Sisters from other communities. Sister Francis Bernard, the superior general, made the canonical visitation at the end of the month and visited with the pastor on October 31. At the regularly scheduled meeting the Staff and Ministry group discussed the needs of the parish. As members of the group Sisters Francis Helene and Mary Elizabeth were present.

On Tuesday, March 24, 1987, the pastor Father Raum was the guest of the sisters at dinner, after which they all went to the 6:30 Mass in the Church and then to the meeting of the Parish Council. As Sister Mary Elizabeth (Boyle) writes in the convent archives: "At the meeting the Sisters heard for the first time that it was the recommendation of the Finance Committee that St. Patrick's School be closed because of lack of funds. After a short discussion the Council voted at that meeting to close the school in June 1987."³⁰ The diocese made the announcement on April 10. On June 30 the last two Sisters left the Convent. One hundred and thirty years of service on Fell's Point came to an end.

The school , however, had been a part of a greater complex. You will remember that when the Irish immigration left many orphans on the Point, Father Dolan had found himself responsible for forty orphans. When a friend provided money in 1847, he bought the home for orphans on Broadway. In 1876, St. Patrick's Orphanage, had moved from the original building on Broadway around the corner to 1707 Gough Street, where it continued the even tenor of its ways. It was under the superior of St. Patrick's School and because their back yards abutted each other at right angles, they shared that macadamized play ground with the parish school. The orphanage was never mentioned in the archives beyond a sentence giving the number of boys there and the names of the two Sisters who cared for them. In 1947, the daily paper announced that Archbishop Keough planned to build a large home in the country for the children in the orphanages of the archdiocese, a move that would, of course, mean the closing of such places as St. Patrick's and Dolan Aid. Nothing more was said in the narrative - not even about the closing. For September 26, 1960, it simply mentions the razing of the two orphanages, which had been empty for over a year. The space then was used as additional playground for St. Patrick's School.³¹

There was also that other institution in the parish, Dolan Aid. You will remember Father Dolan was the priest who brought Holy Cross to Baltimore. St. Patrick's did marvelous work. It began as an orphanage. From it grew a more unusual orphanage, Dolan Aid. I've often thought that the Sisters who served there and at St. Patrick's Orphanage should have been canonized years ago. The place fulfilled a special dream of Father Dolan. It was an orphanage with a difference. When Dolan died in 1870, he left one third of his estate and a brick row house on

Gough Street to the Young Catholic Friends Society to support homeless children of both sexes. In the summer of 1874, Archbishop James Roosevelt Bayley petitioned Saint Mary's for Sisters of the Holy Cross to take charge of the orphanage in that house on Gough Street. Three Sisters were sent with Sister Lydia Clifford as directress. Sister had been a nurse during the Civil War and during the Spanish-American War would lead the twelve Sisters who nursed in that conflict.

Dolan Aid was always intended more as a home for needy children than an orphanage; it was a refuge for children temporarily without a home. Families were kept together; sometimes children of preschool age were taken. The Young Catholic Friends' Society, beneficiary of the will, was asked to appoint seventeen of its members to form the Dolan Children's Aid Society, thereby constituting a board of managers to administer the affairs of the home. Like the children they would shelter, they came from the various parishes of the city. This was no parochial institution like St. Patrick's Orphanage, but a city-wide one. It never received support from the parish; the Sisters, usually two or three but never more than four, formed their own local community. - and in 1918 the pastor of St. Patrick's even required the trustees to pay tuition for the Dolan Aid children attending the parish school.³²

As the Sisters understood their duty, they were "expected to eradicate the evil and vicious habits of the children; teach them habits of neatness and cleanliness; teach them their catechism; prepare them for the sacraments of Penance, Holy Eucharist and Confirmation; and eventually find homes for them in good Catholic families."³³ The arduous part of their ministry they never recorded: clothing and feeding, cleaning and managing on a minuscule budget.

Dolan Aid was always poor. The fund established by the will to support the orphanage was wholly inadequate. From it the trustees paid the larger bills such as those for sugar, flour, etc., and allowed a small amount each month for the support of each child. The Sisters, however, had to collect what they could by yearly subscriptions from generous donors and by weekly trips to the Broadway and Marsh markets to beg for meat, fruit and vegetables.³⁴ In 1896 this practice was forbidden by the superior general, who insisted that the trustees pay for the food, most of which had previously been donated. As late as 1907, they were getting along on \$85. a month with the addition of a few dollars paid for some of the children by their parents or guardians.³⁵

Even the improvements made through the years by the trustees give some indication of the poverty and primitiveness of the place. In 1919, bathrooms, toilets and a laundry were added. When they painted and repaired the front of the building in the spring, the directress wrote simply in the archives: "If they keep on, it will soon be quite respectable looking."³⁶ The next year a hot water heating system was installed, which made the house "very comfortable in winter."³⁷ Rough whitewashed walls were reconditioned and papered; worn floors were replaced in some parts of the house by maple wood with linoleum in the reception rooms and bath. Benches in the refectory gave way to chairs.³⁸

In 1886, the adjoining property at 1711 Gough Street was bought by the trustees for the use of the orphanage. Entrances between the two houses were on the first and upper floors; and somewhat later, a covered walk connected them on the ground floor.³⁹

A detailed report made in 1947 indicates that the nature of the place never changed. Its uniqueness still consisted in the small number of children, about 24 in number, and the inclusion of both boys and girls, very often whole family groups. The 24 children there at the time of the visitation represented only eight families, one of which had five members. That the institution could not exist without the Sisters is obvious from a few financial details. The total amount spent that year for wages and salaries was a little over \$1500, hardly "adequate for one employee living outside the institution." The food budget of \$3000, including donations, meant a per capita daily expenditure of 35 cents for food. The directress accomplished "many excellent things. . . in spite of an almost impossible situation relative to plant, finances and staff." Three Sisters and one part time lay woman as cook cared for the 24 children in the "very old, run-down, three story house."⁴⁰

Despite these limitations, the report continued, the children "for the most part" seemed "relaxed and happy," and perhaps because of these limitations the program had "certain flexibilities which might well be adapted by some of the larger institutions." The children were healthier than might be expected because of the inadequacies of the plant, food budget and staff, but "nutritional lacks were not apparent in superficial observation of the children."⁴¹

Like St. Patrick's Orphanage, Dolan Aid was closed in 1959 and the building razed to enlarge the playground of St. Patrick's School around the corner. The school was grateful for the additional space. The new generation forgot what had been there. On June 30, 1987, even those memories began to disappear.

1. Sesquicentennial Saint Patrick's Parish, (Baltimore, Maryland, 1942), pp.11-12.
2. Ibid., pp.13-14.
3. Norman G. Ruckert, The Fells Point Story, (Baltimore, Maryland: Bodine and Associates, Inc., 1976,) p. 37.
4. Sesquicentennial, p, 109.
5. The primary schools in Maryland were created by the General Assembly in February, 1828. The first one on Fell's Point was established on September 28, 1829. (Ruckert, pp. 37-38.)
6. Sesquicentennial, p. 72.
7. Ibid.
8. Archives, Archdiocese of Baltimore, #52, "Father Dolan and the Orphans Home."
9. Sesquicentennial, p. 73. Parts of this narrative were taken from an article by Grace Hausman Sherwood in an undated clipping from The Baltimore Sun upon the occasion of the sesquicentennial of the parish.
10. Archives Narrative, St. Patrick's, Baltimore, at Saint Mary's, Father Sorin to Father Dolan, September 18, 1849. (Henceforth AN-SP, B at SM)
11. Father James Dolan to Father Sorin, July 19, 1858. Indiana Province Archives. (Hence IPA)
12. Father James Dolan to Father Sorin, August 28, 1858. IPA.
13. AN-SP, B at SM, p. 22.
14. Ibid., p.23.
15. Ibid. p. 3.

16. Ibid. , p. 23.
17. Ibid., p.28.
18. Ibid., p. 60.
19. Ibid.
20. Metropolitan Catholic Almanac and Laity's Directory, (Baltimore, Lucas Bros., 1860), p.59.
21. AN-SP, B at SM, p.30.
22. Ibid.
23. Because St. Patrick's had previously been regarded as an academy, it was considered closed and, although it had been opened in 1859, was placed last on the list like a new establishment. (Archives Narrative, St. Mary's Convent, p.432.) The situation was later rectified.
24. AN-SP, B at SM, p. 31.
25. Ibid., p. 32.
26. Ibid., p. 38.
27. AN-SP, B at SM, 1901-1907. These narratives were removed from the ledgers and microfilmed; hence there is no pagination and the year is very important.
28. Ibid. 1947-1948, p. 1.
29. AN-SP, B at SM, The collection of pertinent papers assembled by Sister Francis Helene.
30. AN-SP, B at SM, 1986-1987, p. 13.

31. Op. Cit. 1960-1961, p. 3.
32. Archives Narrative for Dolan Aid at Saint Mary's, pp.44-45. (Henceforth AN-DA at SM.)
33. AN-DA at SM, p.22.
34. Ibid., 20-21.
35. Ibid., p. 29.
36. Ibid., p, 31.
37. Ibid. p. 32.
38. Our Provinces, p, 256.
39. Ibid., pp. 255-256.
40. Carbon copy of supplement to the Report of the Survey of Catholic Charities to the Archdiocese of Baltimore by the Child Welfare League of America, 130 East 22nd Street, New York, New York 10, October, 1947. Unfortunately the last page or pages of the recommendation have been lost.
41. Ibid.