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# A Chronology Relating to the Jesuits in New England 1611-2014

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**A CHRONOLOGY RELATING TO  
THE JESUITS IN NEW ENGLAND  
1611-2014**

**By  
Rev. Vincent A. Lapomarda, S. J.**

1540 Paul III's *Regimini Militantis Ecclesiae* confirmed the Society of Jesus.

1611 Pierre Biard and Ennemond Masse, Jesuit priests, paved the way for

missionary work among the Indians of Maine. Mass offered on Swan Island in the Kennebec River on November 1<sup>st</sup> was the First Recorded Mass in New England.

- 1613 Gilbert Du Thet, a Jesuit brother, who was killed defending the first Jesuit mission in New England on Mount Desert Island, Maine, became the first Jesuit interred in New England.
- 1632 The first of the reports, *Relations des Jesuites*, published annually down to 1672 and filled with the news about the French Jesuits in North America.
- 1634 Andrew White, a Jesuit priest, founded the Maryland Mission.
- 1646 Gabriel Druillettes, Jesuit priest, established Assumption Mission among the Indians of Maine the same year during which another Jesuit priest, St. Isaac Jogues, was murdered by the Iroquois near Auriesville in New York.
- 1647 Massachusetts Bay Colony enacted a law against priests.
- 1650 Despite that law, Druillettes was received as an envoy of New France by John Eliot in Boston, William Bradford in Plymouth, and John Endicott in Salem. He probably offered the First Mass in Boston on this trip.
- 1651 Druillettes participated in a colonial council in New Haven on his visit to Connecticut.
- 1668 Jacques Bigot, a Jesuit priest, built a chapel at Norridgewock, Maine. His brother Vincent, also a Jesuit priest, labored to revive the work of Druillettes about 1680.
- 1694 Sebastian Râle, a Jesuit priest, began his missionary work at Norridgewock.
- 1700 Massachusetts passed a law against Jesuits.
- 1710 Jesuits administered to the Indians near Lake Champlain in Vermont.
- 1724 Father Râle was murdered at Norridgewock and his scalp taken to Boston by New England zealots.
- 1747 Jacques Sirene, Jesuit priest, succeeded Râle at the mission.

- 1773 Pope Clement XIV's *Dominus ac Redemptor* suppressed the Society of Jesus.
- 1789 John Carroll, a Jesuit before the suppression, was appointed the first Catholic bishop in the United States.
- 1808 Diocese of Boston established with Jean-Louis-Anne-Madeleine Lefebvre Cheverus as first bishop.
- 1814 Pope Pius VII's *Sollicitudo Omnium Ecclesiarum* restored the Society of Jesus.
- 1816 Virgil H. Barber, a prominent New Englander and Episcopal minister, converted to Roman Catholicism. His visit to Claremont, New Hampshire, two years later, led to the conversion of the entire Barber family. Letter of John Adams to Thomas Jefferson excoriating Jesuits as worthy of damnation.
- 1823 As a Jesuit priest, Barber founded the first Catholic church and school in Claremont, NH.
- 1825 Benedict Joseph Fenwick, a Jesuit, consecrated second bishop of Boston.
- 1829 *The Jesuit, or Catholic Sentinel*, predecessor of *The Pilot* as newspaper of the Diocese of Boston, first published.
- 1833 Maryland Province established. Bishop Fenwick inaugurated Catholic colony at Benedicta, Maine.
- 1843 College of the Holy Cross founded by Bishop Fenwick.
- 1847 Rev. John McElroy, S. J., appointed to serve as a chaplain of the American troops in the Mexican War to dispel the notion that forces of the United States were determined to destroy a Catholic nation. That same year, the Jesuits took over the operation of St. Mary's Church in Boston's North End.
- 1848 Jesuits agreed to administer German Church of the Holy Trinity in Boston. John Bapst, a Jesuit priest, arrived in Maine to revive the missions among the Indians at Old Town.

- 1851 Death of Joseph Collidge Shaw, a Jesuit priest and son of a prominent Boston family.
- 1854 A Know-Nothing mob in Ellsworth, Maine, tarred and feathered Father Bapst.
- 1858 Start of the Immaculate Conception, a Jesuit church on Harrison Avenue in Boston.
- 1863 Governor John A. Andrews of Massachusetts signed the charter of Boston College and Boston College High School. Two years later, he did so for the College of the Holy Cross.
- 1864 Death of Samuel Joseph Barber, S. J., son of Virgil Barber.
- 1867 Publication of Francis Parkman's *The Jesuits in North America*.
- 1874 James Augustine Healy, graduate of the College of the Holy Cross and brother of Rev. Patrick Healy, S. J., president of Georgetown University, became the first American of black ancestry to be appointed a bishop (second bishop of the Diocese of Portland, Maine).
- 1877 Jesuits began their work at St. Joseph's in Providence, Rhode Island. They left this church in 1899 after any hope of founding a college had vanished.
- 1879 Consolidation of the New York Mission with the Maryland Province resulted in the Maryland-New York Province.
- 1888 Purchase of the property at Keyser Island for \$32,000.00. The place was used by both the diocesan (especially of the Hartford Diocese) and Jesuit priests for retreats. Tribute to the Jesuits by Governor Oliver Ames of Massachusetts.
- 1894 Transfer of the Jamaica Mission from the English Province to the Maryland-New York Province.
- 1896 Publication of the first of seventy-three volumes, *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*.
- 1899 Outbreak of controversy in education between Charles W. Eliot of Harvard and Rev. Timothy J. Brosnahan, S. J., who defended Jesuit colleges.

- 1907 Rev. Thomas I. Gasson, S. J., acquired property at Chestnut Hill, MA, for the expansion of Boston College.
- 1919 Rev. William F. O'Hare, S. J., became the first Vicar Apostolic of Jamaica from New England.
- 1921 New England was established as a Jesuit vice province under Rev. Patrick F. O'Gorman, S. J., a first vice provincial. Some New England Jesuits were among the American Jesuits sent to take over the mission from the Spanish Jesuits in the Philippines.
- 1922 Shadowbrook, a Jesuit novitiate (and juniorate), founded under Rev. John H. Fisher, S. J., in Lenox, MA. Fairview in Weston, MA, opened for Jesuit scholastics to study philosophy.
- 1923 Rev. Louis J. Gallagher, S. J., Vatican diplomatic courier, brought the relics of St. Andrew Bobola, a Polish Jesuit martyr, from Moscow to Rome.
- 1924 Rev. James M. Kilroy, S. J., appointed second vice provincial of New England
- 1926 The New England Province of the Society of Jesus was established with Kilroy as the first provincial. William Cardinal O'Connell, Archbishop of Boston assigned St. Ignatius Loyola Church as a parish.
- 1927 Jesuit scholasticate completed in Weston, MA, for the study of both philosophy and theology. Rev. Joseph N. Dinand, S. J., elevated to Vicar Apostolic of Jamaica.
- 1929 A civil charter was granted to the scholasticate in Weston to grant degrees.
- 1930 Rev. Thomas A. Emmet, S.J., was raised to Vicar Apostolic of Jamaica.
- 1932 The establishment of the Iraq Mission with Rev. William A. Rice, S. J., as first superior. Rev. James T. McCormick, S. J., became the second provincial of New England. A papal charter was granted to Weston enabling it to grant ecclesiastical degrees.
- 1933 A tertianship was established at Cohasset, MA.
- 1935 Tertianship moved to St. Robert's Hall, Pomfret, Connecticut.

- 1937 Rev. James H. Dolan, S. J., became the third provincial of New England. North Andover Retreat House founded.
- 1938 St. Andrew Bobola House set up in Boston.
- 1939 Father Rice consecrated Vicar Apostolic of Belize, British Honduras. Jesuits obtained property for Cranwell Preparatory School in Lenox, MA.
- 1940 Rev. Martin P. Harney, S.J., published *The Jesuits in History*.
- 1942 Fairfield Preparatory School established in Fairfield, CT, and Jesuits took over Cheverus High School in Portland, ME. Some 500 alumni and friends of Boston College and of Holy Cross perished in Boston's Cocoanut Grove Fire. Death on December 13<sup>th</sup> of Rev. Władimir Ledóchowski, Superior General of the Society of Jesus
- 1944 Rev. John J. McEleney, S. J., became fourth provincial.
- 1945 Rev. Joseph T. O'Callaghan, S. J., became the first chaplain ever to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor.
- 1946 Rev. George M. Murphy, S. J., started the St. Philip Neri School for delayed vocations to the priesthood in Boston. A branch of the school was established in Haverhill, MA, in 1950.
- 1947 Fairfield University opened. Loyola House was established in Boston. The first New England Jesuit volunteers were assigned to the mission in Japan.
- 1948 St. Joseph Retreat House in Charlestown inaugurated.
- 1949 Holy See's document *Suprema Haec Sacra* refuted the theological views of Rev. Leonard J. Feeney, S. J., of St. Benedict Center, Cambridge, MA. Rev. Thomas M. Herlihy, S. J., opened the new church of St. Ignatius Loyola on Chestnut Hill.
- 1950 Father McEleney raised to Vicar Apostolic of Jamaica. Rev. William E. FitzGerald, S. J., became fifth provincial.
- 1951 Rev. Thomas J. Feeney, S. J., elevated to Vicar Apostolic of Caroline and Marshall Islands. Death of Rev. Michael J. Ahern, S. J., founder of the seismographic station at the Weston Observatory and director of the Catholic Truth Program on radio.

- 1954 Berchmans Hall, formerly the Grandliden Hotel, in Sunapee, NH, was obtained by the Jesuits for retreats and villa.
- 1956 Shadowbrook was destroyed by fire. McEleney was elevated to first bishop of Kingston, Jamaica. Rev. James E. Coleran, S. J., became sixth provincial. Al-Hikma University opened in Baghdad, Iraq.
- 1957 Rev. Vincent I. Kennally, S. J., was elevated to Vicar Apostolic of the Caroline and Marshall Islands.
- 1958 Eastern Point Retreat House at Gloucester, MA, founded. Archbishop Richard J. Cushing of Boston, a Founder of the Society of Jesus in New England, elevated to Cardinal. Rev. Daniel Linehan, S. J., was honored for his seismographic experiments at both Poles (North and South).
- 1961 Manresa Retreat House, Ridgefield, CT, opened. Cushing gave Xavier High School in Concord, MA, to the Jesuits (it was returned to the archdiocese before Cushing's death in 1970). Rev. Edward J. Duff, S. J., appointed by the Vatican as one of five (only American) official Roman Catholic observers to the World council of Churches in New Delhi, India.
- 1962 Rev. John V. O'Connor, S. J., became seventh provincial.
- 1963 Rev. Laurence M. Brock, S. J., of Boston commissioned Brigadier General in the National Guard of Massachusetts. Virgil H. Barber House opened in New Haven, CT. The Clavius Group of Jesuit and lay mathematicians established.
- 1964 Cambridge Center for Social Studies and John LaFarge house, both located near Harvard University, opened. Minor seminary of St. Peter's established in Baghdad. Death on October 5<sup>th</sup> of Rev. John B. Janssens, Superior General of the Society of Jesus.
- 1965 Election of Rev. Pedro Arrupe, S. J, as Superior General of the Society of Jesus. Previously, he had studied in the United States and, in the following year, became the first Jesuit General to visit the United States.
- 1966 Round Tree Retreat House established in South Dartmouth, MA. Rev. Samuel E. Carter, S. J., became the first native of Jamaica ordained a bishop as auxiliary of Kingston. Bishop Connolly High School founded in Fall River, MA, with the Jesuits as teachers.



- 1967 The Boston Theological Institute established with Weston College as a participating institution. McEleney elevated to Archbishop of Kingston.
- 1968 Rev. William G. Guindon, S. J., became eighth provincial. The movement of the Jesuit scholastics out of Weston and into smaller communities increased. Jesuits driven out of Baghdad.
- 1970 Jesuits entered politics with Rev. Robert F. Drinan, S. J., who became the first priest elected to serve in the United States House of Representatives, and with John J. McLaughlin running unsuccessfully for United States Senator from Rhode Island. Bishop Carter became the first Jamaican elevated to Archbishop of Kingston. Jesuit Artists Institute opened at the College of the Holy Cross. Novices moved from Lenox to Weston and, in the following year, to Boston, for their formation.
- 1971 Father McLaughlin appointed as Deputy Special Assistant to President Richard M. Nixon.
- 1972 Reorganization of the province with Rev. Richard T. Cleary, S. J., Rev. Leo J. McGovern, S. J., and Rev. Joseph B. McHugh, S. J., as vice provincials. Having served ten years as president of Boston College and another three at Fordham University in New York, Rev. Michael P. Walsh, S. J., resigned.
- 1973 The relocated School of Theology of Weston College in Cambridge, MA, was approved as one of the three centers in the United States for training of Jesuits. *Time* published a cover story on the Jesuits. Rev. George W. MacRae, S. J., became the first New England Jesuit selected to fill the Stillman Chair of Roman Catholic Theological Studies at Harvard Divinity School.
- 1974 Father Richard Cleary appointed the ninth provincial.
- 1976 Publication of the first of two volumes (1976 and 1986) by Rev. James Leo Burke, S. J., entitled *Jesuit Province of New England*.
- 1977 Publication by Rev. Francis J. Osborne, S. J., of the *History of the Catholic Church in Jamaica*, and by Rev. Vincent A. Lapomarda, S. J., of *The Jesuit Heritage in New England*.
- 1979 Rev. Edward M. O'Flaherty, S.J. appointed tenth provincial.

- 1981 Rev. Lawrence A. Burke, S.J., ordained Bishop of Nassau in the Bahamas. He was later elevated to Archbishop of Nassau (1999) and later, to Archbishop of Kingston (2004).
- 1983 Election of Rev. Peter- Hans Kolvenbach, S. J., as Superior General of the Society of Jesus.
- 1985 Rev. Robert E. Manning, S. J., appointed eleventh provincial.
- 1988 Very Rev. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach visited the province.
- 1990 The province established a Nativity school in Roxbury.
- 1991 Death of Father Arrupe who resigned as Superior General in 1983. This year marked the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of St. Ignatius Loyola. William A. Barry, S.J. appointed twelfth provincial.
- 1993 This year marked the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the College of the Holy Cross, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Jesuits at Cheverus and the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the school, and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Fairfield University.
- 1994 Rev. John E. Brooks, S. J. resigned as President of the College of the Holy Cross after serving a record time of twenty-four years (1970-1994). A similar record would be set in the early years of the twenty-first century by Rev. Aloysius P. Kelley, S. J., for the Presidency of Fairfield University. Publication by Rev. Joseph F. MacDonnell, S. J., of *Jesuits by the Tigris*.
- 1995 The General Congregation of the Society of Jesus issued twenty-two documents, among them, one on women which was applauded by the world press.
- 1997 Rev. Robert J. Levens, S.J., appointed thirteenth provincial.
- 1998 Frank Vellaccio, as acting president of Holy Cross College, became the first layman in charge of a Jesuit institution of higher learning in New England.

- 1999 *Thy Honored Name*, history of Holy Cross, the oldest Catholic college in New England, published by Rev. Anthony J. Kuzniewski, S. J., and Rev. Charles F. Donovan, S. J., and others published an updated *History of Boston College*.
- 2000 Cheverus became coeducational. Publication by Rev. Gerard L. McLaughlin, S. J., of *Jesuitana Profiles*.
- 2002 *Annus Horribilis* for the Catholic Church in the United States.
- 2003 The *Skehanos* fossil is named for Rev. James W. Skehan, S. J. Rev. Thomas J. Regan, S.J. named fourteenth provincial. Holy Cross College and the New England Province established a Nativity school in Worcester.
- 2005 Boston College helped the Archdiocese of Boston during its crisis by purchasing a substantial portion of the property of St. John Seminary.
- 2006 This year marked the triple anniversaries of the birth of St. Francis Xavier (1506), the death of St. Ignatius Loyola (1556), and the birth of blessed Peter Faber (1506). Father Drinan was honored with the Congressional Distinguished Service Award. Death of Rev. Lionel P. Honoré, S. J., the first black Jesuit ordained a priest in the New Orleans Province became the only black Jesuit tenured as a college professor in the New England Province to which he had transferred after coming to the College of the Holy Cross in 1975.
- 2008 Election of Rev. Adolfo Nicolas on January 19<sup>th</sup> as the thirtieth Superior General of the Society of Jesus.
- 2009 Myles N. Sheehan became fifteenth Provincial of New England on July 31, thereby assuming leadership of the eventual reintegration of the province with the Provinces of Maryland and New York.
- 2011 The 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the arrival of the Jesuits in New England. The Annual Jesuit Gala held in the spring honored past Jesuit Presidents of the College of the Holy Cross (John E. Brooks), Boston College (J. Donald Monan) and Fairfield University (Aloysius P. Kelley) who had served the longest in these three educational institutions of New England.

- 2013 The election on March 13 of the first Jesuit pope (Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Argentina) who took the name Francis, and the ordination on April 27 of Michael W. Banach, a native of Worcester and an alumnus of the College of the Holy Cross, as Apostolic Nuncio (both the pope and the nuncio have incorporated into their coat of arms the seal of the Society of Jesus).
- 2014 The 200th Anniversary of the Restoration of the Society of Jesus by Pope Pius VII on August 7, 1814, was marked by a Mass concelebrated by Jesuits at St. Ignatius Church on Chestnut Hill on August 7th.
- 2014 The New England Province (1926-2014) and the New York Province (1943-2014) unified to become the USA Northeast Province on December 3<sup>rd</sup> as part of a worldwide reconfiguration of the territories of the Society of Jesus.