CHAPTER FIVE
THE JESUIT HERITAGE IN CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS

Worcester County in central Massachusetts embraces a population of close to 640,000 spread throughout fifty-six connecting towns around such major cities as Worcester, Leominster, Fitchburg and Gardner. In this central part of the Bay State, there are some 350,000 Roman Catholics who are members of the Diocese of Worcester which was established on 14 January 1950. The relationship of the Jesuits to this geographical area can be seen in the early period of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when Indians from the Jesuit missions of Canada took captives from this area, in the modern period of the nineteenth century when the College of the Holy Cross came into existence, and in the contemporary period of the twentieth century when the Jesuit contribution to Worcester County perdures.

I

In reviewing the early period of the Jesuits and central Massachusetts, the story is like that of other parts of the Bay State, for Catholics and their priests were held in distrust and hostility here as well. The anti-Jesuit law passed by Massachusetts in 1647 was a formal manifestation of this. There is no reason to believe that those who settled such areas as Brookfield, Westborough and Worcester before King Philip's War (1675-76) rejected it. And if one may judge from the works listed in the Mather Collection of the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, the leading Puritan divines were extremely interested in anti-Jesuit tracts.

Before John Eliot, the first missionary to Worcester, visited the Nipmuck Indians on Pakachoag Hill (approximately the site of the College of the Holy Cross today) in 1674, he had exhibited remarkable hospitality when Father Gabriel Druil-
lettes, a Jesuit missionary to the Abnakis, came to his home in Roxbury on 28 December 1650. The Puritan missionary was so concerned about his Catholic counterpart that he invited Father Druillettes to remain for the winter rather than risk the return trip to Canada through the cold and snow of the wilderness. Even though the Jesuit was on a diplomatic mission to the leaders of Massachusetts Bay (an exception permitted by the anti-Jesuit law), it could be surmised that the two apostles to the Indians compared notes about their work. Today the first edition of Eliot's translation of the New Testament for his Indians, published in 1661, is treasured at the American Antiquarian Society.

During King Philip's War, the white settlements at Quaboag Plantation (Brookfield), Quinsigamond (Worcester) and elsewhere suffered from the ravages of the son of Massasoit (the road from Rice Square in Worcester to Millbury is named for this Chief of the Wampanoags, the father of King Philip). King Philip waged a war against the expansion of the white settlers but these Indians, like those that Eliot had converted to Christianity, remained aloof from the conflict. Even though the Jesuits had no part in these frontier assaults (except insofar as the Indians defeated in that conflict took refuge among some of the Indians at the Jesuit missions in Canada where, for example, the Abnakis forged strong bonds with the Jesuits and the French), New Englanders blamed them for the difficulties.

However, subsequent raids were carried out against the frontier towns of New England by Indians from the Jesuit missions and this justified, at least partially, the anti-Jesuit attitude. Samuel Leonardson, for instance, taken from Quinsigamond in 1695, was a captive of the Pennacooks, neophytes of the Jesuits at the mission on the Chaudière River in Canada. Not only was young Leonardson present at the raid on Haverhill in 1697 when Hannah Duston was seized, but later he helped her to escape. Both were under an Indian master who prayed according to the French manner as the Jesuits taught their neophytes. This same master had prayed according to the English manner when he had lived some years previously in the Lancaster household of Reverend Joseph Rowlandson whose wife, Mary Rowlandson, had been captured on 10 February

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1676 before she was ransomed at Redemption Rock in Princeton. A marker was set up in Worcester, at the corner of Hamilton and Grafton Streets in 1930, indicating the site of Leonardson's home, and markers relating to Mary Rowlandson were set up that same year in both Lancaster and Princeton.

Moreover, there were the raids of the winter of 1703-04 when the children of Digory Sergeant were taken from Quinsigamond. Daniel and Mary were baptized Catholics and chose to remain in Canada while John returned after about twelve years even though the Jesuits and the Indians wanted him to remain. Their father was a carpenter who lived on Sagatabscot Hill in Quinsigamond. Daniel and Mary did return for a visit in 1740 but refused to remain. They were Worcester's first Catholics and they had lived at the Jesuit mission of Caughnawaga near Montreal. Interestingly enough, when Indians raided Lancaster in late July of 1704, it was thought that Jesuits accompanied the expedition.

Other captives who chose to remain at the Jesuit mission were the Rice brothers, Silas and Timothy, from Westborough. Related to Thomas Rice, who had settled the town in 1674, they were taken by the Indians with their cousins in 1704. Since the town was at the crossroads of frequented Indian trails, it was easy for the Indians, who sought young whites to gain ransom money or to adopt into their tribes, to seize these boys. A marker indicates that the site of the kidnapping was near a brook on West Main Street in Westborough.

Timothy, who, like his brother Silas became a Catholic, visited Westborough in 1740. Since he had been adopted into the family of one of the Indian chiefs, he had become a chief of the Caughnawagas and Governor Jonathan Belcher accorded him a friendly welcome as his guest on this visit. Thus, Chief Oughtzorongoughton, as Timothy was known, was well disposed toward the American cause before he died in September of 1777.

It was the policy of French military leaders, who were fighting the British in the struggle for North America, to prevent an alliance between the English settlers and the Indians in New England. One way to implement this policy was to harass the white settlers with raids on frontier towns like Brookfield which

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did not escape attack in 1708. Such a policy helped to increase the hatred for Catholics and the French as well as for the Jesuits and their Indian neophytes. Against such a background of trouble on the frontiers, Massachusetts was relieved to learn of the death of Father Sébastien Râle, S.J., in August of 1724, and of the fall of the French citadel at Louisbourg in July of 1745.

One example of Massachusetts' contempt for the Jesuits was the celebration of Pope's Day (November 5th). Though it had been celebrated as early as 1685 in Boston, it had to be toned down by 1752 because it had resulted in unnecessary injury to innocent citizens. The Jesuits were ridiculed in the demonstrations because of their alleged complicity in the Titus Oates Plot of 1678. Charles Paxton, after whom the town incorporated in central Massachusetts in 1765 was named, was ridiculed in effigy in one of Boston's celebration of Pope's Day presumably because of his penchant for political intrigue.

With the formal triumph of England over France by 1763 and the formal suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773, the Jesuits had faded into non-existence as far as central Massachusetts was concerned, except for John Carroll. This member of the suppressed Society of Jesus was appointed the first American Catholic bishop in the United States in 1789. Just the year before that, Worcester County, a section of the commonwealth where Calvinism was very strong, had rejected by a vote of forty-three to eight the approval of the Federal Constitution because its delegation feared that the new document would permit a Catholic to hold public office (Carroll's cousin, Charles Carroll, had signed the Declaration of Independence for Maryland in 1776, and another member of that family, Daniel Carroll, the Bishop's brother, had signed the new Federal Constitution for Maryland in 1787).

The modern period in the relationship of the Jesuits to Worcester County began with John Carroll, but it did not really begin to flourish until another Jesuit, Benedict Joseph Fenwick, became Bishop of Boston in 1825. This geographical area was under the jurisdiction of Bishop Carroll until 1808 when Jean Lefebvre de Cheverus was appointed First Bishop of
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Boston. Bishop Cheverus had tried to bring the Jesuits into his diocese, but it was his successor, Bishop Fenwick, who succeeded.

When Bishop Fenwick came to Boston in 1825, Worcester had begun to grow as the leading city of central Massachusetts because of its position on the Blackstone Canal. The construction of the canal had attracted Catholics to the city so that Bishop Fenwick visited the city at the head of the canal in 1826. Today on Main Street at Exchange Street in Worcester, a granite tablet recalls that Bishop Fenwick offered the first Mass in the city at that time in a room of the United States Arms Tavern.

The first priest that Bishop Fenwick sent to Worcester with the opening of the canal was the future Jesuit Robert D. Woodley. Father Woodley visited Worcester at least twice in 1828 and 1829 when he offered Mass. His missionary journeys included such towns as Uxbridge, Oxford and Leicester as well as Worcester.

Bishop Fenwick soon considered Worcester a vital center of his diocese. After he visited it again in August of 1832, on his way back from Hartford, he informed the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith in Rome, on 26 September 1832, that he had set up one of five missions in Worcester. It was here that the Catholic church began to flourish under Father James Fitton in 1833 when this priest visited even Dudley, Leicester, Millbury, Oxford, and Webster from the mission at Worcester.

By the end of the first year in Worcester, Father Fitton, who had worked for Bishop Fenwick among the Indians of Maine shortly after his ordination in 1827 (Fitton was the first candidate that Bishop Fenwick accepted for the priesthood back on 24 December 1825), was making plans to build a church. With the encouragement of Bishop Fenwick and the help of the historian William Lincoln, who saw to it that the bigots did not succeed in preventing the priest from purchasing the land, Father Fitton obtained the land for the first Catholic church in Worcester on 1 May 1834. Most of the $600.00 was raised by Catholics who had the joy of seeing Father Fitton bless the cornerstone of Christ’s Church on the following July 7th. Completed two years later, the Catholic population of what is now St. John’s parish had grown to 300 communicants.

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However, the founding of the first Catholic church in Worcester was not Father Fitton's only achievement in central Massachusetts. Having purchased about sixty acres of land on the Hill of Pleasant Springs in Worcester in 1836 from the descendants of Daniel Gookin who had purchased the original site from the Indians on 13 July 1674, Father Fitton established Mount Saint James Academy, a school not unlike the one he had attended under Father Virgil H. Barber, S.J., in Claremont, New Hampshire. It was this property that he transferred to Bishop Fenwick on 2 February 1843 before he left Worcester.

Bishop Fenwick, who envisioned a college and a seminary on Mount Saint James, approached the Jesuits. They had already turned down his invitation to open a college in his Catholic colony at Benedicta, Maine. He asked the Jesuit Provincial, Father Francis Dzierozynski, to send at least a few Jesuits to help him start a college and the Jesuit superior reluctantly consented to the request. On 21 June 1843, Bishop Fenwick blessed the cornerstone of a new building for the first Catholic college in New England, and Charles Constantine Pise, a Catholic priest from New York, gave an address on the role of the Jesuits in education. With Father Thomas F. Mulledy, S.J., as its president, and two Jesuits, George Fenwick, the Bishop's brother, and James Power, as the third priest, the new college opened its doors on 1 November 1843 with twelve students. For his role in laying the foundation for the college, the athletic field at Holy Cross honors the memory of Father Fitton. Until it received a charter of its own in 1865, the new Jesuit institution, the first Catholic college in New England, would grant its degrees through Georgetown University, an institution founded by Bishop John Carroll and the mother of all Jesuit colleges in the United States.

One aspect of Father Fitton's apostolic life in Worcester was the honor paid him by the summer visits of the Penobscots from Maine. These Indians, among whom the priest had labored before coming to Worcester, camped not far from the church and attended Mass with unusual devotion. Following Mass in Christ's Church, Father Fitton moved among his former neophytes and conferred on each of them his priestly blessing before the Penobscots departed. His work among them had been
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in the tradition of the Jesuit missionaries who had cared for these Indians before the American Revolution.

On 5 April 1845, Father Matthew W. Gibson arrived as the resident pastor of Worcester. He had left the Diocese of Philadelphia in 1844 and entered the novitiate at Frederick, Maryland, intending to become a Jesuit. Although the Jesuit Provincial hoped to use him at the College of the Holy Cross, he was assigned to Christ's Church by Bishop Fenwick. The latter paid a special visit to the city on April 20th to help overcome the opposition to his replacement of Father Adolphus Williamson. It was under the leadership of Father Gibson that a new church, dedicated to St. John by Bishop John Bernard Fitzpatrick, in the presence of Bishop Fenwick, on 24 June 1846, replaced Christ's Church. Father Gibson became the pioneer builder of churches in other parts of Worcester County, especially since he helped to build churches in Fitchburg, Leicester, Leominster, Millbury, Templeton, Webster and West Boylston as well as in Worcester.

Shortly before his death, in one of his last official acts, Bishop Fenwick had turned over the deed for Holy Cross College to the Jesuits on 6 August 1846. The year following the founding of Holy Cross, the bigotry of that area was evident when the General Association of the Congregational Churches of Massachusetts accepted the Report on Popery with its vehement attack on the Jesuits at the new institution. From twelve students at its opening, it had grown to 100 at the time of Bishop Fenwick's death. In 1849, because of Representative Erastus Hopkins, the Congregational minister from Northampton (he was the son-in-law of Rev. Dr. William Allen of Boston who had authored the Report of Popery), leader of the opposition, Holy Cross was denied a charter by the Bay State and had to continue to function under the civil charter of Georgetown University. With the coming of the Know-Nothings to power, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1855 sent the Smelling Committee to Holy Cross to find evidence with which to attack the Jesuits. Among the influential friends of the Jesuits in those early years was Orestes A. Brownson who drew up the first petition for the charter of the College of the Holy Cross and who sent his sons to this same Jesuit school.
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Between 1834 and 1874, George Bancroft, a native of Worcester, wrote his ten-volume work, *History of the United States from the Discovery of the Continent*, and described the work of the Jesuits. While he was generous in his admiration of the Jesuits in New France ("... not a cape was turned, nor a river entered, but a Jesuit led the way."), he was wrong in his interpretation that the hatred of the Puritans for members of the Society of Jesus went back to the cruelties inflicted by the Indians during the raids on towns like Deerfield and Haverhill early in the eighteenth century. That Massachusetts had passed anti-Jesuit laws in 1647 and 1700, years before those raids, is sufficient evidence to indicate that hatred of the Jesuits and their neophytes antedated, for instance, the raid on Haverhill in 1708. While Bancroft reflects a certain sympathy for Father Sébastien Râle, S.J., it is necessary to be wary of some of the insinuations and the conclusions that are contained in his history.

Fortunately, the hostile atmosphere in Massachusetts did not curtail the Jesuits for whom Bishop Fenwick wanted to do so much more to assure that they had a commanding role in the development of his diocese. Under his successor, Bishop Fitzpatrick, who was a close friend of the Jesuits, the Society of Jesus was able to continue the work that it had begun in central Massachusetts, in particular by laying the foundations for churches not too far from Holy Cross.

While Father Fitton was the first priest to visit Southbridge in 1840, it was the work of the Jesuits between 1846 and 1858 that nourished the roots of Catholicism in that town. Father William Logan, S.J., visited Southbridge frequently when he was teaching at Holy Cross between 1846 and 1850. His successor, Father Peter J. Blenkinsop, S.J., who continued Father Logan's work, was placed in charge of the church dedicated to St. Peter by Bishop Fitzpatrick in Southbridge on 1 May 1853. This church was the predecessor of St. Mary's and it had as Father Blenkinsop's Jesuit successors Peter Kroes (1854-56), James C. Moore (1856-57), and Peter M. Folchi (1857-58). On 24 July 1854, during the era of the Know-Nothings when Father Kroes cared for the church twice a month, bigoted anti-Catholics damaged St. Peter's.
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Father Philip Sacchi, S.J., who came to Holy Cross as a teacher of modern languages in 1845, cared for the French Catholics in places like Millbury, Webster and West Boylston. The son of a French soldier in the Russian Imperial Army and an Italian mother (he took her maiden name), he was fluent in French. Having entered the Jesuits in White Russia, he came to Georgetown University before he was assigned to Holy Cross. At Webster (the Jesuits under Father Logan were here as early as 1847), Father Sacchi worked with the French before the bishop assigned a resident priest for the Catholics of St. Louis’ parish. Even the Germans and Poles in surrounding towns benefited from the Jesuit’s ministry. When death came to him on 6 April 1850, it was his dear friend, Bishop Fitzpatrick who administered to Father Sacchi the last rites of the Catholic Church.

Also, the work of the Jesuits extended to Leicester. Although it was Father Gibson who said the first Mass here on 12 January 1846, it was the Jesuits who cared for the Catholics of this town during the formative years of what is now St. Joseph’s parish. At the beginning, in 1851, the Jesuits offered Mass in the town hall until Father Kroes said the first Mass in the new church, St. Polycarp’s, on 1 January 1855. With the members of the parish increasing, Father Robert W. Brady, S.J., President of Holy Cross College, blessed the cornerstone of a new church, St. Joseph’s, on 1 September 1867. A number of Jesuits, including Father Anthony F. Ciampi, Peter J. Blenkinsop, and Joseph B. O’Hagan, all of whom served as presidents at Holy Cross, attended the parish before the Jesuits handed over charge of it to the diocese in August of 1873. Father Thomas F. McDermott, S.J., who joined the Jesuits in 1930, is from St. Joseph’s.

Another church under the care of the Jesuits was St. Aloysius in Rochdale. The work of the Jesuits among these Catholics began as far back as 1854 and continued on a regular basis from 1858 to 1869. Father Anthony F. Ciampi, S.J., used the timbers of the building that had served as St. Philip’s in Grafton from 1848 to 1854 and as St. Polycarp’s in Leicester from 1855 to 1869, and he built the church described as the “traveling-est” church in Worcester County and one with “gypsy
blood in its timbers.” Father Ciampi, who put up the church in 1869, cared for it until 1871 (he became President of Holy Cross College the following year for the third time). Of the Jesuits who followed him, Father Peter Blenkinsop, S.J., is noteworthy because he was in charge of St. Aloysius from August of 1873 until August of 1880 when the diocese assumed responsibility for it.

When Father James Quan became pastor of the Catholics in Spencer in August of 1858, he exchanged this mission for Southbridge where the Jesuits were in charge. It is interesting to note that Father John Bapst, who was spiritual father at Holy Cross from 1859 to 1860, was also at Spencer during this period. Father Thomas Sheerin, S.J., planned the new church in 1864, his last year at Holy Cross, and his successor, Father Livy Vigilante, S.J., purchased the land for the parish in 1865. Through the efforts of various Jesuits, including Father Vigilante, who was there from 1864 to 1867, the old mission was so developed that a resident pastor was sent by the bishop to the newly established parish of Our Lady of the Rosary in January of 1872. With that, the Jesuit responsibility for the Catholic church in Spencer ceased.

The third quarter of the nineteenth century was particularly crucial for the future of the College of the Holy Cross. When fire ruined the Jesuit institution on 14 July 1852, it appeared that was the death of the Catholic college. Fortunately, Father Ciampi, who was President of Holy Cross College at that time, refused to be overwhelmed by the tragedy and decided to rebuild. Not only did the Jesuits go out to the neighboring churches to help raise funds to cover the $50,000 damages, but Father Ciampi vigorously championed the cause of Holy Cross. In a letter of 21 December 1857, he was particularly grateful for the generosity of Protestant dealers who refused to press payment of bills due by the college. That Father Ciampi’s vision prevailed became abundantly clear when, on 24 March 1865, Governor John A. Andrew signed into law a charter granting the College of the Holy Cross the right to confer degrees after this bill had passed the General Court with the help of Alexander H. Bullock, Speaker of the House, and State Senator Elijah B. Stoddard.
When the jurisdiction for Catholics in central Massachusetts passed from Bishop John J. Williams of Boston to Bishop Patrick T. O'Reilly of Springfield in 1870, the Jesuits were deeply involved in the growing Catholicism of this part of the Bay State. Not only were they in charge of parishes in Leicester, Rochdale and Spencer but they had become the leaders of Catholicism in Central Massachusetts. On 8 August 1875, for instance, when Father Edward Holker Welch, S.J., formerly of Holy Cross College, preached at the blessing of the cornerstone for St. John’s in Clinton, some four thousand people reportedly showed up.

The influx of immigrants during the years after the Civil War brought the French Canadians in increasing numbers to central Massachusetts. This became evident in the French parishes established at Webster, Spencer, Southbridge, Millbury, Gardner, Fitchburg and Douglas as well as in Worcester between 1869 and 1890. The most interesting of these parishes was Notre Dame des Canadiens in Worcester, a city with a population of about 60,000 in 1880. Here Father P. F. Vignon, S.J., cared for the church in 1882 and Father P. I. Baudry, S.J., assumed responsibility for it from 1882 and 1884 because the Bishop of Springfield had requested the help of the Canadian Jesuits (the historic bond of the Jesuits with this parish was evident as recently as Memorial Day of 1976 when the Notre Dame Mausoleum was blessed with a large painting of the North American Martyrs, which was formerly in the parish church, permanently attached to the wall of its chapel). Another church, St. Aloysius in Gilbertville, was dedicated to the Jesuit saint on 17 November 1872. And at the Immaculate Conception in Fitchburg, where a mission lasting fifteen days was preached by two Jesuits in 1890, 400 men were enrolled in the League of the Sacred Heart and 150 women in the Apostleship of Prayer.

On 29 November 1896, St. James Church in the Fisher­ville section of Grafton was dedicated. Constructed during the pastorate of Father Michael J. Carroll, who graduated from Holy Cross College in 1876, it contained the original altar used at his alma mater. Unfortunately, a fire in 1945 destroyed the marble altar which symbolized another bond that existed between the church in central Massachusetts and the Jesuits.
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The impact of Holy Cross College on central Massachusetts was abundantly clear by the end of the nineteenth century. Its brand of Catholicism had attracted Charles B. Fairbanks, Jr., the author who wrote under the pseudonym Aguecheek and who was baptized at Holy Cross by Bishop Fitzpatrick in 1852. Another intellectual, Father John Boyce, pastor of St. John's in Worcester and a novelist, felt very much at ease with the Catholicism of Worcester and with the work that the Jesuits were doing at Holy Cross. This Catholic institution had produced by the turn of the century at least six bishops, one third of the priests working in Worcester County, including Father John J. Powers who built St. Paul's Cathedral, and a number of other graduates who were taking their place in the areas of education, law, medicine and politics. One was John C. Bossidy of the Class of 1881, a leading ophthalmic surgeon in Boston who addressed the Holy Cross Alumni Dinner in Boston in 1910 with these words:

And this is good old Boston,  
The home of the bean and the cod,  
Where the Lowells talk to the Cabots,  
And the Cabots talk only to God.

Moreover, Holy Cross, like Boston College, had a number of distinguished Jesuits who served it before the nineteenth century came to an end. Father James Clark, who held the office of president from 1861 to 1867, was a graduate of West Point and a classmate of General Robert E. Lee. Father Patrick H. Brennan, who taught a number of subjects at Holy Cross after the Civil War, was a medical doctor in that conflict. And Father James B. O'Hagan, who was president from 1872 to 1878, was a chaplain in the Civil War. Of these, only Father O'Hagan was buried at Holy Cross where his grave is not far from that of Father John McElroy, a chaplain in the Mexican War (and first superior of the Jesuits in Boston) and that of Brother John J. McShea who was a veteran of the Spanish-American War. The remains of at least a half dozen more Jesuits who performed military service for the United States in the last century lie buried in the historic cemetery at Holy Cross.

That Jesuit presidents of colleges and universities are not
infallible became clear when a person who had been previously released from a penitentiary in Worcester County passed himself off as a bishop at Holy Cross College on 4 December 1899. The impostor convinced Father John L. Lehy, S.J., that he was the Bishop Theophile Meerschaert, Vicar Apostolic of Oklahoma and Indian Territory from 1891 to 1905. Introduced to the student body by President Lehy, who described the guest of honor as "almost a martyr," the strange person fascinated the students with some plausible tales, including how he escaped being burned at the stake by the Indians. As was customary in those days, holidays were declared in honor of the "distinguished" bishop. However, they were quickly withdrawn when it was learned that the "bishop" was a hoax. After he tried to pass himself off as the Cardinal Archbishop of Baltimore in France, the imposter was imprisoned in 1901.

Finally, while the Jesuits had a friend in Governor John A. Andrew who signed the charter of Holy Cross in 1865 and in Governor Oliver Ames who established a $1000 scholarship in 1887, they were also indebted to George F. Hoar, the Worcester citizen who rose to national office. As United States Senator from 1877 to 1904, Mr. Hoar did not hesitate to speak out against the bigotry of the American Protective Association which stirred up the anti-Jesuit rhetoric on the national scene. Not only did he praise the work of Holy Cross College when it celebrated its jubilee in 1893, but he rebuked the A.P.A. in speeches in Worcester and Newport in July of 1895. When the Senator died in 1904, Father Joseph F. Hanselman, S.J., President of the College of the Holy Cross, praised this friend of the college as "a broad and liberal man."

III

The opening of the contemporary period of the twentieth century was an auspicious one for the Jesuits in central Massachusetts. One of their finer moments was when Theodore Roosevelt visited Holy Cross College as President of the United States and spoke to the graduates on 21 June 1905. "It is eminently characteristic of our nation," he observed, "that we should have an institution of learning like Holy Cross, in which the effort is
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consistently made to train not merely the body and mind, but
the soul of man, that he shall be made a good American and a
good citizen of our great country.” And in 1906 Governor
Curtis Guild, Jr., of Massachusetts, whose wife later became a
convert to Catholicism, became the first governor in New Eng­
land honored by a Jesuit school when Holy Cross College con­
ferred upon him an honorary doctoral degree.

Of the Jesuits who contributed to the development of the
church in central Massachusetts, Father Albert Peters, S.J., was
important. A native of France, this country’s language was
helpful to him as he contributed to the growth of the church in
Spencer, Leicester and the Brookfields. Active for many years
at Holy Cross (1868-72, 1879-89, and 1901-22), he was still
living there when Leo T. Goddard of Spencer, a graduate of
Holy Cross (1906) and grandson of a couple who had wel­
comed Father Peters to that town, was ordained a priest in
1911. Incidentally, it was to Brookfield that Christine Otis, a
captive taken in the raid on Dover, New Hampshire, in 1689,
went to live from 1717 to 1732 following her return to
Protestantism after she had been converted to Catholicism. Also,
in nearby West Warren, there is a church dedicated to a Jesuit,
St. Stanislaus Kostka, which was established in 1913.

Stationed at Holy Cross during the first quarter of the
century was the Jesuit historian Robert Swickerath. Born in the
Rhineland at Kyllburg in Germany in 1869, he entered the
Jesuits in 1890 and taught history at Holy Cross College from
1907 to 1918 and from 1923 to 1925. As he indicated in an
article published in the Woodstock Letters for 1907, he also
ministered to the German colonies of New England. Before his
death in 1948, he spent twelve or so years of his teaching career
at Weston College where he left a lasting impression on many
Jesuits as a distinguished professor of church history.

The Jesuits did not remain aloof from chaplaincy work
during World War I. In 1918 those at Boston College and Holy
Cross were caring for the Catholics at Fort Devens. Father
Eugene T. Kenedy, a New York Jesuit, who had been com­
missioned in the United States Army, served as a military
chaplain at Chateau-Thierry, St. Mihiel and the Argonne before
he returned to the United States at the end of the war and
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was discharged at Fort Devens on 3 May 1919. Of the Jesuits who served as chaplains in World War I, at least eight taught at Holy Cross (Terence J. Boyle, Charles F. Connor, John A. Cotter, Thomas J. Delihant, Edward P. Duffy, Hugh A. Gaynor, James T. Moakley, and Gerald C. Treacy).

A Jesuit who dominated the intellectual life of central Massachusetts during his years at Holy Cross was Father Michael Earls. A native of Southbridge, he belonged to that generation of American priests which was more concerned about coming to grips with the intellectual life of American Catholicism than with the problems of planting the church. Admired by William H. O’Connell, Cardinal Archbishop of Boston, he labored to make Catholicism intellectually respectable with his writings such as The Wedding Bells of Glendalough (1913) and Marie of the House D’Anters (1916). Although he reflected a veneer of anti-Yankeeism and anti-Semitism, not uncommon among Catholics, he did stand above his peers in contributing to the cultural life of his times. Before his death in 1937, he had been a teacher at Holy Cross for about twenty years.

Just as Father Earls dominated the intellectual life of Catholics in central Massachusetts, David I. Walsh dominated the political life of his co-religionists. The first Democrat of the Catholic faith to be elected a governor in Massachusetts, he held the office from 1914 to 1916. A native of Clinton and a graduate of Holy Cross College (1893), he served from 1919 to 1925 and from 1926 to 1947 in the United States Senate where he achieved prominence on the Committee on Naval Affairs. He was a good friend of the Jesuits at Holy Cross College where he received a doctoral degree in 1912 (Fordham and Georgetown also honored him with a doctoral degree in later years). On the occasion of Senator Walsh’s fiftieth anniversary of graduation from Holy Cross, which corresponded with the centenary of that Jesuit school in 1943, former Governor Alvin T. Fuller (himself the recipient of an honorary degree from Holy Cross in 1926) gave $35,000 to establish a scholarship in memory of Monsignor Richard Neagle of the Class of 1873, the pastor of his wife’s church and a good friend of the former governor. After the Senator’s death on 11 June 1947, the Walsh Papers were donated to his alma mater where they are available today.
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for the use of scholars.

Just as there is an impressive list of former Holy Cross students who have become bishops (over thirty), so too is there an impressive list of Jesuits from Holy Cross who have become bishops in Jamaica. Looking at their year of appointment, there was John J. Collins (1907), who taught mathematics and was prefect of discipline; William F. O'Hare (1919), who taught French and was an assistant prefect of discipline; and Joseph N. Dinand (1927), who was president. Samuel E. Carter, the first native consecrated bishop (1966) and the Archbishop of Kingston since 1970, taught sociology as a young scholastic at Holy Cross from 1950 to 1951.

As a competitive undergraduate school, Holy Cross has been esteemed by natives of central Massachusetts because of its records in basketball, baseball and football. It won the NCAA basketball championship in 1947 and the NIT basketball championship in 1954, the NCAA baseball championship in 1952, and went to the Orange Bowl in 1946. Even golf, a field in which William P. Turnesa became the first graduate (Class of 1938) of a Jesuit school to win the United States Amateur (1938) and the British Amateur (1947), helped the outside world to equate Worcester with the College of the Holy Cross.

During the eighty years that Worcester County came under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Springfield, there were only three bishops: Patrick T. O'Reilly (1870-92), Thomas D. Beaven (1892-1920), and Thomas M. O'Leary (1921-49) of whom the second and third were educated by the Jesuits. Bishop Beaven was at Holy Cross for both his secondary and college education between 1862 and 1870. The relationship that existed between these bishops and the Jesuits was evident when Holy Cross allowed the clergy of the diocese to use the college for annual retreats. That Bishop O'Leary acted as chief ordaining prelate when Father Dinand was elevated to the episcopacy on 30 October 1927 is an indication that the bond was a close one between the Diocese of Springfield and the Jesuits at Holy Cross.

Once more the Jesuits at Holy Cross College rose to the challenge when war broke out in 1941. Of some fifty-five Jesuits
who served as chaplains from the New England Province of the Society of Jesus during World War II, more than half of them taught at Holy Cross. The College itself, which had been selected for the establishment of a unit of the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps in 1941, was one of about thirty American educational institutions helping the Navy Department (current United States Secretary of the Navy, J. William Middendorf of the Class of 1945, was one of many who earned his bachelor's at Holy Cross at that time). Certainly, most distinguished was the service of Father Joseph T. O'Callahan, S.J., who rose to full commander in the United States Navy and was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor from President Harry S. Truman on 23 January 1946 for his courage on the damaged carrier, U.S.S. *Franklin* (in 1965, the U.S.S. *O'Callahan* was named in his honor).

Bishop John J. Wright, a graduate of Boston College in 1931, was appointed First Bishop of Worcester in 1950 at a time when the Jesuits were more than 100 years established in central Massachusetts. The new bishop held that position until 1959 when he became Bishop of Pittsburgh. His relations with the Jesuits may be discerned from the decision of Boston College (1947) and Holy Cross College (1950) in conferring upon him honorary degrees for he proved himself to be an eloquent spokesman for liberal Catholicism. Not only did he dedicate in Dudley the first church named for the Jesuit Saint Andrew Bobola in the United States on 21 February 1954 (Father Louis J. Gallagher, S.J., a priest involved in the rescue of the saint's body, preached the homily), but he established two parishes under the patronage of Jesuit saints: North American Martyrs (1952) in Auburn (a parish which used Kimball Hall on the campus of Holy Cross College as its first church) and St. Francis Xavier (1953) in Bolton (Known as “The Lord's Acre Church”). Understandably, these were seen as appropriate gestures recognizing how integral a part of the new diocese were the Jesuits who had not only helped in its parishes, but had housed the Assumptionist Fathers after a tornado destroyed their campus on 9 June 1953.

If Bishop Wright guided the growth of the new diocese in a period when Catholics numbered almost half of the population
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of Worcester County, it became the responsibility of Bishop Bernard J. Flanagan, a native of Vermont, to guide it through a period when the style of Catholicism was being altered by the changes flowing from the Second Vatican Council. Coming to Worcester in 1959, he was no stranger since he had graduated from Holy Cross College in 1928. Assisted by Timothy J. Harrington, Auxiliary Bishop of Worcester since 1968 (he graduated from Holy Cross in 1941), he continues to help the Catholics adjust themselves to a mature Catholicism suited for today's world. At the same time, he and Bishop Harrington have developed remarkably good relations with the Jesuits. Bishop Flanagan, for example, has honored them by being present at their funerals and by ordaining Jesuit candidates for the priesthood.

During Bishop Flanagan's years, however, there has been a marked decline in the number of Jesuits assisting in the local parishes as a consequence of the liturgical changes introduced by the Second Vatican Council. Whereas in the mid-1950s there were from fifteen to twenty Jesuits covering the parishes of central Massachusetts, today there are no more than a couple needed. The importance of this past work can be measured by the regular visits of Father Robert B. MacDonnell, S.J., a professor of physics at Holy Cross College, when he had the honor of saying the first Mass in the new church of Saint Catherine of Sweden in Worcester on 11 January 1962.

Another development has been the decline in the use of Holy Cross College for retreats by priests of the diocese. Down to the early 1960s, this was a common practice of priests from the old Diocese of Springfield (clergy retreats began in 1842 under Bishop Fenwick and priests had been using Holy Cross at least before the outbreak of World War I) and then of priests from the new Diocese of Worcester. However, with the changes in retreat styles and the availability of the facilities of the Passionist Monastery in Shrewsbury, another manifestation of the old style of Catholicism has vanished.

The Jesuits continue to work in the Diocese of Worcester in other apostolates apart from Holy Cross College. One is the hospital chaplaincy work, especially at Worcester City Hospital where Father Edward K. Cheney, a former mission-
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ary who was honored by the Queen of England for his work in Jamaica, has been an inspiring force since 1965. Another is the work of Father John T. Murray, a graduate of the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis (1946) and of Georgetown University Medical School (1952) as well as a former radiologist at St. Vincent Hospital, who has been a practicing psychiatrist at Worcester State Hospital. And a third is the silent work of Father Frederick A. Harkins with Alcoholic Anonymous groups.

Obviously, the Jesuits themselves, like any group in the Catholic church, have been experiencing changes. From a peak in the early 1960s of about eighty Jesuits teaching at Holy Cross College, they have declined to about thirty-five today, compared to the rise of the lay faculty from about sixty to a hundred in the same period. If this trend continues, the Jesuits will decline by at least ten more within a short period of time. And if the presence of Jesuits is what makes a college a Jesuit college, then there is an obvious conclusion particularly at a time when the Jesuits no longer dominate the courses in philosophy and theology, even though they still fill the chief offices of president and dean.

Also, ever since 25 March 1969, when the Jesuit community was separately incorporated from the College of the Holy Cross, the Jesuits have not only exercised less control over the school but they have had no building that they can call their own. While the financial status of the college may have dictated that arrangement, subsequent arrangements of separate incorporation worked out at both Boston College and Fairfield University are more reflective of the historic role that the Jesuits have played at these institutions. Although some Jesuits are content with the present arrangement, there are those who would have preferred another solution. If the Jesuits had kept the title to the land at Holy Cross while the college corporation exercised ownership of the building and the facilities on the campus during a limited transitional period, perhaps the influence of the Jesuits would be stronger than it is today. Yet, because they are still the major contributors to the College of the Holy Cross (since the separate incorporation came into existence, the Jesuits have given more than a million dollars to the
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school in the past eight years), the Jesuits still have some influence on campus.

One manifestation of change among the Jesuits themselves is the introduction of the new lifestyle of smaller communities. A handful of Jesuits from Holy Cross College experimented with this by renting a house on the property of the Bigelow Nursery in West Boylston from 1971 to 1973. Since 1973, the original community, Strawberry Hill, has given way to a somewhat larger one located on City View Street neighboring the campus. Still other Jesuits have chosen to live alone apart from a community while the majority of them live in Loyola Hall which opened on the campus at Holy Cross College in 1965. Their status, it should be noted, in all these arrangements is in housing that is not owned by a Jesuit corporation.

The unseating of United States Congressman Philip J. Philbin of Clinton by Father Robert F. Drinan, S.J., in 1970 had an impact not only on central Massachusetts but also on the Jesuits themselves. Although some Jesuits were sympathetic to Father Drinan's campaign to gain a seat in Washington so as to help end the Vietnam War, others have not been at all sympathetic with his apparent inconsistency in refusing to back a constitutional amendment to protect the life of the unborn. Yet, even though one may disagree with Father Drinan's position on abortion when it is considered in the context of the civil law, there is no doubt that the Jesuit strictly adheres to the moral teaching of the Catholic Church that abortion is immoral. That the Jesuit monthly, SJNews (a newspaper published by the Society of Jesus in New England from 1971 to 1975), went so far as to cast doubt on Father Drinan's candidacy in the midst of the 1974 fall campaign by raising the question of ecclesiastical permission was an indication that not every Jesuit was enthusiastic about a priest in politics.

From June 22nd to August 14th of 1970, at least fifty Jesuits interested in the fine arts gathered for the First Workshop of Jesuit Artists at Holy Cross College. The Jesuit relationship with the art of the Baroque period is well-documented and Jesuits came from around the world to participate in the historic workshop in Worcester. Not only was Holy Cross' own professional harpsichordist, Father Thomas D. Culley, a partici-
pant, but Father André Bouler of Paris, a friend of Le Corbusier and Pablo Picasso, created a painting that attracted the highest bidder. Father Joseph P. Love, a native of Worcester County and a graduate of Holy Cross (1950), came from Tokyo where he teaches at Sophia University and won high praise for his paintings. It is interesting to note that, in addition to other works that have a relationship to the Jesuits (Giovanni Battista Gaulli’s “The Vision of St. Ignatius at La Storta” and “Peacock Window” by John LaFarge, the father of the Jesuit by that name), the Worcester Art Museum has a treasured painting, “Garland of Flowers with the Education of the Virgin,” by the Jesuit Brother Daniel Seghers (1590-1661).

Not far from Holy Cross College is St. Benedict Center in Harvard, founded by the former Jesuit Leonard J. Feeney. Close to Fruitlands, a place visited by Orestes A. Brownson, St. Benedict is the home of the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The Feeneyites moved from Cambridge to Harvard in 1957 and took up residence at Still River. By that action Father Feeney came into central Massachusetts, a part of the Bay State to which his Jesuit Provincial, Father John J. McEleny, hoped to send him when he directed the former Jesuit to Holy Cross College in late August of 1948. With the passing of time, relations between Father Feeney and ecclesiastical officials have improved so that the censures directed against him more than twenty years previously were removed from the former Jesuit on 22 November 1972 and most of his followers were reconciled on 4 March 1974 when they professed their faith according to the Roman Catholic Church before Bishop Flanagan of Worcester. Such was the resolution of the case which Catherine Goddard Clarke, in her book, The Loyolas and the Cabots, published in 1950, declared was “the greatest blunder that had been made in the history of the New England Province.”

At least seventy-five Jesuits have come from Worcester County in the history of New England. The earliest was Father John F. Lehy, a native of South Royalston, who entered the Society of Jesus in 1874 and became President of Holy Cross College from 1895 to 1901. Another was John E. Welch of Millbury, who joined the Jesuits as a priest in 1915. Father
Frederick L. Berigan and his father, (a native of Ireland) Brother John J. Berigan, were from Worcester. Also, there are a number of brothers like the Cartys (John and Paul), the McGuinns (Albert and Walter, late brothers of Kathleen who is the widow of Daniel J. Wellehan, a shoe manufacturer of national prominence), and the O'Connors (Thomas and William) of Worcester, and the Donnellys (John and Philip) of Spencer whose uncle, Timothy Donnelly, died at Custer's Last Stand on 26 July 1876. Also, one cannot pass over Father John J. Donohue who is making a contribution to the intellectual life of Catholicism in the Middle East by teaching at the American University in Beirut.

Today Holy Cross College remains the center of the Jesuit presence in central Massachusetts. A school of some 2500 students, it includes among its many distinguished recipients of honorary degrees Eamon de Valera (1920), Joseph B. Ely (1934), John W. McCormack (1942), Harry G. Stoddard (1955), Lyndon B. Johnson (1964) and Mother Teresa (1976). But those honors cannot compare with the distinction that was accorded to graduates of Holy Cross College: E. Bennett Williams of the Class of 1941 who was honored for his work as a remarkable lawyer in 1963, E. Michael Harrington of the Class of 1947 who was honored for his intellectual leadership in 1971 and W. Arthur Garrity, Jr. who was honored for his courage in pursuing justice under the law in 1976. In this last year alone, the high caliber of the recipients of honorary degree emphasized that the College of the Holy Cross during the presidency of Father John E. Brooks, S.J., stood together with Judge W. Arthur Garrity, Jr., against racial injustice, with Dr. Mildred F. Jefferson against abortion, with Mother Teresa against poverty and, above all, for the dignity of the human person.

In reviewing the last twenty-five years, there are many Jesuits whose contributions excel. One thinks of Father Hubert C. Callaghan, the specialist in industrial relations, who was beloved by the firemen of Worcester; of Father William L. Lucey, the author of the biography of Governor Edward Kavanagh of Maine and of the Catholic church in that state, and an illustrious professor of history; and of Father Leo A. O'Connor,
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the director of planning at Holy Cross, who taught theology for many years. Among the living, there is Father Joseph F. Busam, the oldest of the Jesuits at the College and the active chaplain of the Knights of Columbus, whose recommendations as a past chairman of the Department of Biology were highly valued by Harvard Medical School; Father William Van Etten Casey whose issues of The Holy Cross Quarterly on the Berrigans, China and other topics have challenged the thinking of the Catholic establishment; Father Edward J. Duff, the former Editor of Social Order and official Vatican observer at the 1961 World Council of Churches, who is a professor of political science; Father Francis J. Hart, the friendly chaplain and director of intramural athletics after whom the Hart Recreation Center has been named; and Father Joseph M.-F. Marique, the indefatigable pioneer in the Christian interpretation of the classics, who has guided Classical Folia from its birth in 1946 to its present status as an international scholarly journal. And the contribution of Father T. Lawrence Foran, the Director of the Catholic Alumni Sodality of Worcester County, whose late brothers were priests of the Diocese of Worcester and whose nephew prosecuted the case of the Chicago Seven, cannot be overlooked.

Today the relationship between the Jesuits and Worcester County is quite strong because of about 2500 graduates from the College of the Holy Cross and the more than 500 from Boston College who make their home in this part of the Bay State. While a surgeon like Edmund J. Croce, a bishop like Bernard J. Flanagan, a banker like Edward C. Maher, and a city manager like Francis J. McGrath indicate that those who have attended Jesuit schools are contributing to the quality of life in central Massachusetts, there are many more graduates of Jesuit schools who are playing significant roles throughout Worcester County in different professional careers by serving God and their fellow man. Consequently, there is no doubt that the Jesuit heritage in central Massachusetts is quite vibrant.