CHAPTER EIGHT
THE JESUIT HERITAGE IN RHODE ISLAND

The story of the Jesuit relationship to Rhode Island antedates the establishment of the Diocese of Providence in 1872 and continues today in the Ocean State where Catholics number at least 600,000 out of a total population of almost 930,000. This chapter will survey the connection of the Society of Jesus to Rhode Island during the early period of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when Jesuits were not tolerated, the modern period of the nineteenth century when Jesuits not only contributed to the planting of Catholicism but operated St. Joseph’s in Providence, and the contemporary period of the twentieth century when the Jesuits have been present in various ways in the Ocean State.

I

The story begins with Roger Williams, a dissident who was driven out of Massachusetts and founded Providence Plantation in 1636. Although the new colony around Narragansett Bay gained a reputation for religious liberty, the charter of King Charles II of England granting freedom of conscience in 1663 was later restricted by the inclusion of a secret clause disfranchising Catholics. This was not made public until 1719 when it became known that no Catholic could hold public office. Thus, it is doubtful that it was in any way superior to the Religious Toleration Act passed in 1649 by Maryland where the Jesuits were influential.

While one might argue that the clause against Catholics was not reflective of the views of Rhode Island’s illustrious founder, there can be no doubt about his own hostile views about the Jesuits. Roger Williams wrote to John Winthrop, Jr., on 6 December 1659 expressing his displeasure with the action of the Pope in sending Jesuits to Venice. In 1670 Reverend
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Williams, who was not ignorant of the success of the Jesuits in converting the Indians in Canada, blamed the missionaries for stirring them up. And, in his diatribe against the Quaker leader George Fox in 1672, he taunted his opponent by associating him with the Jesuits.

Exactly what contact there was between the inhabitants of Rhode Island and the Jesuits is not clear for these early years of Roger Williams' time. But Bishop Laval of Quebec, who had most likely derived his information from the Jesuits, reported to Rome in the fall of 1663 that there were some 20,000 Narragansetts in six towns centering around Providence. A few years later the Narragansetts from their stronghold in South Kingston supported the native cause against the White settlers in King Philip's War until they were defeated by the English in 1676. Yet, despite the rhetoric of New Englanders in blaming the Jesuits for Indian troubles in that war, these missionaries were innocent.

Roger Williams died in 1683, but the intolerance of the Jesuits in Rhode Island, as elsewhere in New England, continued, especially when Richard Coote, Earl of Bellomont, carried his anti-Jesuit drive into Rhode Island. Visiting this colony as the representative of the English crown in the fall of 1699, he was determined to bring about legislation outlawing the Jesuits. His duplicity was exposed when he met there in October (of the same year) Father Jacques Bruyas, S.J., who came as a representative of the Governor of New France to ascertain Bellomont's views of the Indians and to discuss repatriation of prisoners after the Treaty of Ryswick. If Father Gabriel Druillettes, S.J., did not pass through Rhode Island on his way to and from Connecticut during mid-seventeenth century, then Father Bruyas was the first priest to visit the Ocean State.

Despite its reputation for toleration, Rhode Island was not entirely free of the anti-Jesuit animus so prevalent in New England during the eighteenth century. Like the other colonies in New England, it was partially motivated by hatred of the French and Jesuits. Not only had it been involved in the various attacks upon the French in Canada, but its own contribution to the assault upon Louisbourg in 1745 won a reimbursement of
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6,322 pounds sterling. The consciousness of the Jesuits to Rhode Islanders was evident in 1751 when Job Shepherd's almanac published at Newport satirized the many efforts of these missionaries among the Indians.

Although the Jesuits were suppressed before the American Revolution, their influence was not lost on the French military and naval officers who contributed to the American cause and were so evident at Newport and elsewhere during the War for Independence. From 1685 to 1762, the Jesuits were in charge as the teachers and chaplains of the royal naval colleges at Brest and Toulon. The French naval officers who so graciously entertained John Adams at dinner on the Triomphant off Spain on 13 December 1779 surprised the American by speaking with such admiration for the former Jesuits.

 Obviously, Mr. Adams did not fully realize that a priest, Father Ruggiero Giuseppe Boscovich, a member of the suppressed Society of Jesus, was appointed by the French King to be director of marine optics for the French Navy shortly before the outbreak of the American Revolutionary War. Actually the Jesuits had been recognized long before that time as the specialists for the textbooks on military and naval sciences. One of them, Father Paul Hoste, a professor at Toulon, had written the classic work, L'art des armées navales, which was published at Lyons in 1697 and became the bible of French naval theory and practice during the eighteenth century. Consequently, it is not unlikely that Charles-Henri Louis d'Arzac de Ternay, the French Admiral who died at Newport in December of 1780 and was buried with Catholic rites in the Protestant churchyard of historic Trinity Church (a special tablet of black marble inside this Episcopal church honors the memory of Admiral de Ternay, a Roman Catholic), came under the influence of the Jesuit masters.

Moreover, two of the heroes of the Revolutionary War had studied under the Jesuits. Jean Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, Comte de Rochambeau, who had set up his headquarters at Newport in 1780, was a student under the Jesuits at Blois for about an academic year. Newport honors him with a statue in King Park. Thaddeus Kosciuszko, who served on the staff of General Nathaniel Greene of Newport, studied under the Jesuits
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at Breese and had a half-brother that was a Jesuit. The Polish hero, who honored the Greenes by a visit to Newport in 1784, was first buried in the crypt of the Jesuit church in Soleure, Switzerland, when he died in 1817 before his body was returned to his native land and entombed in the Cathedral at Cracow.

Rhode Island, like the other states in New England, came under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Quebec and the Vicar Apostolic of London before the United States had its first American Catholic bishop in John Carroll. Appointed in 1789, the former Jesuit became the first Catholic bishop in the history of the new nation with jurisdiction over the Ocean State.

The early history of the Jesuit relationship to Rhode Island cannot overlook the artist Gilbert C. Stuart who was born at Saunderstown in 1755. Not only did he portray George Washington, but he did portraits of Bishop John Carroll, the parents of Father Joseph Coolidge Shaw, S.J., and John Holker, a relative of E. Holker Welch, S.J., and the first French Consul in Boston. Stuart died in 1828 and his birthplace is an historical landmark in the Ocean State today.

One of the earliest priests whom Bishop Carroll sent to New England was John Thayer, a native of Boston and a former Congregationalist minister, who had served as chaplain to Governor John Hancock of Massachusetts. A graduate of Yale, he studied in Europe where he met some members of the suppressed Society of Jesus. Following his conversion in 1783, he lived with the ex-Jesuits of the English College at Rome. Introduced to Bishop Carroll by the ex-Jesuit, Charles Plowden, who furnished information about the Bostonian (Benjamin Franklin told the Bishop that he did not have too high an opinion of him), Father Thayer was assigned to New England. He visited Newport as early as 1791 and as late as 1798 and perhaps at other times between those two visits. And, since the law disfranchising Catholics had been repealed in 1783, Catholics were enjoying greater freedom in the exercise of their rights as the century terminated.

II

With the opening of the modern period of the relationship of the Jesuits to Rhode Island, Bishop John Carroll was the dominant personality. Not only did he exercise jurisdiction over
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the state until 1808, but he paid a personal visit to it in the fall of 1803. On his way back from dedicating Holy Cross Church in Boston, he stopped at Newport and baptized two children in the family of Joseph Mehe.

John Lefèvre de Cheverus, who was ordained by Archbishop Carroll in 1810 as first Bishop of Boston, had jurisdiction over Rhode Island until 1825. Although there were no former Jesuits working in his diocese before the restoration of the Society of Jesus in 1814, there was still evident a bias against them. For David Benedict, the Baptist pastor of Pawtucket, attacked the Jesuits in 1813 when he published his history of the Baptist churches. This attitude, not unlike the one evident in the writings of Roger Williams, was not uncommon in New England at that time.

With the appointment of Benedict Joseph Fenwick, S.J., as Bishop of Boston in 1825, the Jesuit presence in Rhode Island became more evident. For, on 4 January 1828, the new bishop sent Father Robert D. Woodley, who joined the Jesuits in 1857, as the first resident priest to the Ocean State. A student at Georgetown University when Bishop Fenwick was President there, Father Woodley laid the foundations of a number of churches in the state, starting with the one at Newport. On 8 April 1828, he purchased Eleazar Trevett’s schoolhouse on Barney Street. Although the priest remodeled it, Bishop Fenwick was not content with the site and had Father Woodley obtain another site nearby. Still Father Woodley’s early work was the beginning of St. Mary’s, the oldest Catholic parish in the state.

Bishop Fenwick paid his first visit to Providence in 1828. On April 14th, he celebrated Mass and preached in Mechanics Hall. Later that same year, on September 14th, he administered confirmation for the first time in that city. By 1830, Providence was the second largest city in New England with about 17,000 people.

Though Newport has the oldest Catholic parish in the state, Pawtucket built the first Catholic church in Rhode Island. The land was a gift of the industrialist David Wilkinson, a Protestant and the brother-in-law of Samuel Slater, the cotton manufacturer. Following his initial visit to Providence, Bishop Fenwick visited Mr. Wilkinson on April 15th to express his
gratitude for the plot of land. Returning from the First Provin­
cial Council at Baltimore on 25 December 1829, Bishop Fen­
wick stopped at Pawtucket to dedicate St. Mary’s, the new
church that Father Woodley had constructed at the corner of
Grace and Pine streets. Bishop Fenwick helped this church
through difficult times with his own limited funds. The church
was torn down in 1885, but a granite monument behind the
present church marks the site of the original St. Mary’s.

If Rhode Island was not totally free from bigotry, Newport
was at least generous in its tolerance. When a mob set fire to the
Ursuline convent in Charlestown, Massachusetts, a number of
leading Newporters wrote Bishop Fenwick, inviting him to trans­
fer the site of the convent to their town. There, under Father
Woodley’s successor, Father John Corry, a new church, which
Bishop Fenwick dedicated on 20 August 1837 under the
patronage of St. Joseph, was built to replace the first Catholic
church until a new St. Mary’s was constructed.

The first church in Providence was dedicated by Bishop
Fenwick on 4 November 1838. Located on High Street, it was
the work of Father Corry, who had purchased the lot for $1,584
in 1832, and it was named in honor of Saints Peter and Paul.
One of the more beautiful churches in the Diocese of Boston, it
cost about $12,000 and cared for more than a thousand Catho­
lics when it opened.

With Providence continuing to grow, Bishop Fenwick in­
structed Father Corry to build another church. The priest,
somewhat reluctant to see his parish divided, followed the
bishop’s directions. Located on State Street not far from the
Rhode Island Capitol, the small Gothic structure was dedicated
by Bishop Fenwick on 3 July 1842 during the Dorr Rebellion.
The church’s Spanish bell was a gift of Philip Allen, a Protestant
and a leading manufacturer who employed many Irishmen in
his mill. The church was named in honor of St. Patrick.

Bishop Fenwick had a difficult time with the Catholics
of Providence. Not only did he have to overcome the opposition
of Father Corry and his flock to the division of his parish, but
he was forced to recall Father Patrick O’Beirne, assistant pas­
tor. Friction continued until Bishop Fenwick dismissed Father
Corry as pastor of Saints Peter and Paul on 8 September 1843.
There was a month of turmoil as laymen took over the church and its property and did not surrender it until Father James Fitton succeeded in winning them over. If the laymen had persisted, Bishop Fenwick would have placed them under interdict.

When William Tyler, a cousin of Virgil H. Barber, a Jesuit priest famous in New Hampshire, became first Bishop of Hartford in 1844, he took up residence in Providence at Saints Peter and Paul since his jurisdiction included Rhode Island where there were 5,180 Catholics. Edward Putnam, a convert from New Hampshire and a former student at St. John’s College in Fordham and at Holy Cross College, became the first priest ordained in Providence when Bishop Tyler performed this ceremony in 1845. On 11 April 1847, Bishop Tyler rededicated Saints Peter and Paul, which he had enlarged to Fenner Street, as his cathedral, and Father James Ryder, S.J., President of Holy Cross College, preached at the ceremony. The church was torn down in 1876 to clear the way for a new cathedral, but the original church was located just about where one finds the center aisle and sanctuary of the present cathedral.

The church at Woonsocket was started under Bishop Fenwick but completed under Bishop Tyler. As early as 1828, Father Woodley had celebrated the first Mass in the Woonsocket area in the house of William Allen, a liberal Quaker. The building, which was constructed around 1802, is located on Pound Hill Road in Union Village and has been known as the Osborne House and the Slocumb House. During Father Fitton’s time, a number of students at Mount St. James Academy in Worcester, Massachusetts, reportedly came from Woonsocket Falls, and he was the priest who purchased the land on Meriden Road and Daniel Street on 10 October 1842 for the church. Two years later it was dedicated by Bishop Tyler under the patronage of St. Charles Borromeo, a friend of the Jesuits, and served the Catholics of the area until it was destroyed by fire in 1868.

One of Bishop Fenwick’s friends at Newport was the niece of the late Archbishop John Carroll, Mrs. Robert Goodloe Harper, the widow of Senator Harper. During his visit to Newport in the summer of 1841, when he administered confirmation on July 31st, the Bishop of Boston stayed at the Harper home and met

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such distinguished persons as William Ellery Channing, whose statue adorns the city. After Newport was elevated to a parish under Bishop Tyler, the Harpers (the widow and her daughter, Miss Emily Harper) continued their interest in the Catholic church there and perhaps were responsible for encouraging the construction of the present structure after Father Fitton took over as resident pastor and purchased the land on Spring Street on 2 February 1847. Not only did St. Mary's, which was dedicated on 25 July 1852 under the title of the Holy Name of Mary, Our Lady of the Isle, have the Harpers as its chief benefactors, but it was supported by General William Starke Rosecrans, a convert since 1845 and a friend of Colonel Julius Garesché, brother of Father Frederick Garesché, S.J., of the Missouri Province. General Rosecrans' own brother, Sylvester, was a Fordham man and first Bishop of Columbus, Ohio, from 1868 to 1878.

When Bishop Tyler died in 1849, he was succeeded in the following year by Bernard O'Reilly as Bishop of Hartford, and the Jesuits were as much an object of attack by the Know-Nothings as other Catholics. The Sisters of Mercy, whom Bishop O'Reilly had brought to Providence, were ridiculed as "female Jesuits" after they opened their first convent in New England on 12 March 1851 under Mother Xavier Warde. Two years later, citizens were exposed to the bigotry of Allessandro Gavazzi, an ex-priest, who fulminated against the Jesuits and their use of confession for political oppression. During the second half of 1853, the Providence Journal carried a number of articles by "Sentinel" that kept the fires of bigotry alive. And the anti-Jesuit literature was not missing from the campaign that elected William W. Hoppin, a Know-Nothing candidate, Governor of Rhode Island from 1854 to 1857.

Before the Jesuits formally established themselves in Providence during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, they were never foreign to the clergy of the Ocean State. In 1854 Father John McElroy, S.J., gave the first clergy retreat in the state. When Bishop O'Reilly perished at sea in January of 1856, it was Francis P. MacFarland, who taught at Fordham College, who succeeded him two years later. And, at the dedication of St. Mary's in Providence on 11 July 1869, it was Michael
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O'Connor, S.J., first Bishop of Pittsburgh, who preached the sermon.

On 28 April 1872, Thomas F. Hendricken was consecrated first Bishop of the newly-established Diocese of Providence. Bishop Henricken, who once thought about entering the Society of Jesus, invited the Jesuits to take over St. Joseph's. The church, which goes back to 3 August 1851, when the cornerstone was blessed, is still standing on the corner of Hope and Arnold streets in the Fox Point area of the city and is the oldest Catholic church in Providence today. Father Joseph E. Keller, S.J., the Jesuit provincial, accepted the Bishop's invitation because he thought that Providence would be a suitable place to found a college.

Under the leadership of Father John Bapst, S.J., who had suffered under the Know-Nothings in Maine, the Jesuits arrived in Providence on 7 April 1877. They established the Cleary School in honor of their second superior, Father William B. Cleary, S.J. (1879-84), and they were accepted into the Providence community as was evident, for example, when the Providence Journal eulogized Father Bernard A. Maguire, S.J., the illustrious preacher and former President of Georgetown University, who died in April of 1885. They were called upon at least twice in the 1880s to open the session of the Lower House of the Rhode Island Legislature with a prayer. And a sign of their greater involvement in the problems of the city was St. Joseph's Institute which Father Daniel F. Haugh, S.J., began in 1894 on Dove Lane before it was moved to Williams Street.

Our Lady of the Rosary was another parish that came under the care of the Jesuits in Providence. Before the land for the present location on Travers Street was purchased in 1892, the Portuguese (they had colonies at Gloucester, Boston, New Bedford and Fall River as well as in Providence) had remodeled the Protestant church that stood between Brook and Traverse Streets on Wickenden. Opened for worship on 22 March 1885, it was a mission of St. John the Baptist in New Bedford before Bishop Hendricken entrusted it to St. Joseph's. It was a mission of the Jesuits from November of that year to the following February when the bishop elevated it to a parish with his own diocesan priests.

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When Matthew Harkins, a former student at Holy Cross College from 1862 to 1863, became Bishop of Providence in 1887, the French Canadians were widely established in his diocese. By 1890, they numbered 32,000 out of a total Catholic population of 100,000 and they had established more than a half dozen churches across the state at such places as Centerville, Manville, Pawtucket, Providence and Woonsocket. Before the Jesuits left Providence in January of 1899, Father Edouard Hamon, S.J., had been already involved in an apostolate of the French-speaking Jesuits from Canada by giving missions in these parishes.

III

The story of the Jesuit relationship to Rhode Island in the contemporary period of the twentieth century must begin with John LaFarge. Son of the artist by that name, LaFarge was born at the family home on Sunnyside Place in Newport on 13 February 1880. His mother was Margaret Mason Perry, whose father, Dr. Christopher Grant Perry, was a son of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry, the hero of the Battle of Lake Erie in the War of 1812, and a nephew of Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry, who reopened Japan to foreign trade in 1854. The statue of the former stands in Washington Square, while one of the latter is in Touro Park in Newport, and both are buried in separate sections of Rhode Island’s historic cemetery on 30 Warner Street in the same city.

Moreover, Father LaFarge’s mother was herself the great-great-granddaughter of Benjamin Franklin. The line went back to Sally Franklin who had married a William Bache. On 26 July 1784, Franklin had written to his daughter, Mrs. Sarah Bache, from Passy, France, that spices were never seen in Europe until the Jesuits brought them and they were used at King Charles IX’s wedding reception. His brother, James Franklin, the great-great-great-uncle of the Jesuit, founded the state’s first newspaper, the Rhode Island Gazette, in 1732, and James Franklin, Jr., began the Newport Mercury in 1758.

Before Mrs. LaFarge became a Catholic, she worshipped at Trinity Church in Newport. Her ancestors, who went back to the founding of the colony, are buried in the adjoining cemetery.

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The grave of another ancestor, Benedict Arnold, the first Governor of Rhode Island from 1663 to 1666, is to the right of the Van Zandt House on Pelham Street in the right hand corner of the lot. Mrs. LaFarge, who died in 1925, is buried a few miles outside the city at St. Columba's Cemetery in Middletown, where her son, Christopher Grant LaFarge, the architect, is also buried.

After he attended the Coddington Public School and Rogers High School in Newport, John LaFarge went to Harvard where he graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1901. Educated for the priesthood at Innsbruck, Austria, he was ordained there on 26 July 1905. He returned to the United States and entered the Society of Jesus at Poughkeepsie, New York, on November 12th of that same year. His subsequent career as a Jesuit was so extraordinary that he was one of the twelve Jesuits singled out in the history of the United States for inclusion in the 1976 Bicentennial Calendar of Jesuit Missions. His work as editor of the Jesuit weekly, America, reflected responsible leadership in the Catholic Church where he fought for interracial justice and civil rights long before these became popular issues. As early as 1897, he had met Theodore Roosevelt at his brother’s place in Sauderstown. The future president encouraged him in his desire to become a priest. Near the end of his career, he had written an open letter on 18 February 1961 to President John F. Kennedy, who had married Jacqueline Bouvier at St. Mary’s in Newport in 1953, the LaFarge family’s parish, on personal religion.

Apart from Father LaFarge’s entrance into the Jesuits, there were few events of note relating to the Society of Jesus during the rest of Bishop Harkins’ years. The bishop himself had studied as a young priest from 1869 to 1870 at the Gregorian University in Rome under Father John B. Franzelin, S.J., who was raised to the Cardinalate in 1876, and Father Domenico Palmieri, S.J. Jesuits conducted retreats for his clergy, for example, when in the summer of 1913 two were held for a total of 180 priests of the diocese. And he established St.-Louis-de-Gonzague at the corner of Rathbun and Privilege streets on 28 February 1902 in Woonsocket, another parish honoring a Jesuit saint in the diocese.
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Developments in the secular history of the Ocean State during Bishop Harkins' time had a relationship to the Jesuits in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Father LaFarge's father, the artist and friend of the historian Henry Adams, died at Providence in 1910. Aram J. Pothier, who became the first Catholic to win an election to a governorship in New England as a Republican by being elected Governor of Rhode Island in 1908, was given an honorary degree by the College of the Holy Cross in 1912. And Ambrose Kennedy, a graduate of Holy Cross in 1897, who rose to Speaker of the Rhode Island House in 1912 and served in the United States Congress as a Republican from 1913 to 1923, was honored by his alma mater with an honorary degree in 1918.

William A. Hickey, a graduate of Holy Cross College in 1890, succeeded Bishop Harkins as Bishop of Providence in 1921. Accepted by Bishop Thomas D. Beaven of Springfield, a fellow alumnus at the Jesuit college, he was assigned as the first pastor of St. Aloysius Church in Gilbertville, Massachusetts, in 1903 and remained there until 1917. Bishop Beaven was the chief ordaining prelate when Father Hickey became a bishop two years before he assumed charge of the Diocese of Providence. As Bishop of Providence until 1933 he enlarged St. Francis Xavier Academy, a high school founded in 1851 and staffed by the Sisters of Mercy in his see city and he was also responsible for expanding St. Stanislaus' in Woonsocket by opening the Catholic school there in 1924.

Certainly, the most significant development related to the general history of Catholicism in New England during Bishop Hickey's time was the Sentinellist movement. Deriving its name from La Sentinelle, a newspaper published by Élphège J. Daig- nault, a native of Woonsocket and a graduate of the Jesuit College of Sainte-Marie in Montreal, it was a movement that focused on the control of church funds and stirred up the passions of religion and nationalism. When Bishop Hickey launched his drive in 1926 to expand the diocesan school system, he also set assessments for the support of The Providence Visitor and the National Catholic Welfare Conference. A significant segment of the French-speaking community in Rhode Island was opposed to using funds for these purposes and sought
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to prevent the bishop from receiving parish funds for assessments beyond those for the high schools.

Daignault, who had sought the advice of the Roman canonist, Father Arthur Vermeersch, S.J., defended the French Canadians in Rhode Island seeking to restrict the funds. Since the censure of Canon 2341, according to Vermeersch and others, did not apply to moral persons like parish corporations even when an ecclesiastical superior was part of the civil entity, Daignault did not have to fear the penalties of excommunication. He filed suits on behalf of members of ten parishes in the spring of 1927. And he had the sympathetic support of the pastors of both Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Central Falls and of Saint Aloysius in Woonsocket.

The controversy raged throughout French-speaking Canada and New England between 1926 and 1928. Bishop Hickey, who was strong-willed and believed that it was the duty of the faithful to obey and pay, was defended by Eugène Jalbert, a graduate of the Collège Sainte-Marie. The principals opposed to Bishop Hickey were announced as excommunicated on 15 April 1928, and ten days later Judge Chester W. Barrows of the Supreme Court of Rhode Island ruled that the funds of the parish corporations involved could be used for other purposes of the Catholic church than for the parish itself.

However, the Jesuit involvement in this case was not restricted to Father Vermeersch's counsel. The pastor of Saint Aloysius Church in Woonsocket, M.W.A. Prince, not only had corresponded with Father Vermeersch in a letter of 17 July 1927, but his brother, Father Pierre Prince, S.J., was at l'Immaculée-Conception in Montreal where he evidently was in contact with Jesuits sympathetic to the Sentinellists. One was Father Eugène Gousie, S.J., a native of Central Falls, who warned Daignault in a letter of 12 November 1927 that the Knights of Columbus were out to defeat him. Father Louis Lalande, S.J., a leading canonist, was quite sympathetic with Daignault, as was Father Fortunat Laurendeau, S.J. Since the French-speaking Jesuits had family and cultural ties with the French-Canadian parishes in Rhode Island where, as in other parishes in New England they had preached missions, it was understandable that they did not remain aloof from the con-
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troversy. Daignault and his supporters, having submitted to the decisions against them, were openly welcomed by the Jesuits in Montreal when the Canados (an organization of which he was president) held their congress there in 1932. Not only did the Jesuits supply them with chaplains (they had been deprived of them after 1924), but the Jesuit provincial, Father Adelard Dugré, preached the homily at the Mass in the Jesuit church of the Gesù inaugurating the congress.

Further, the Jesuit relationship to Rhode Island was manifest in other ways during the Hickey years. William S. Flynn, a graduate of Holy Cross College in 1907 who was elected Governor of Rhode Island on the Democratic ticket in 1922, was granted an honorary degree by his alma mater the following year. Oliver Hazard Perry LaFarge, a nephew of the Jesuit, won the Pulitzer Prize in 1929 for his novel, Laughing Boy. LaSalle Academy, which antedated the time when Bishop Hickey came into office, was proving to be a source of vocation for the Jesuits. And during the 1920s, Bishop Hickey was interested in having the Jesuits open a retreat house in Rhode Island.

Of the vocations from Rhode Island during these years the FitzGeralds of Providence are of interest because three brothers of this family had joined the Jesuits. Leo E. FitzGerald, who was ordained on 18 June 1930, taught modern languages at Holy Cross College for most of his career. William E. FitzGerald, who was ordained on 26 July 1932, became Jesuit provincial for New England in 1950 and later assumed a teaching position at Boston College. And James E. FitzGerald, who was ordained on 23 June 1935, became President of Fairfield University in 1958, one of three Jesuits of that name (some did not use the capital “G”) to hold that office.

With the appointment of Francis P. Keough as Bishop of Providence in 1934, the Jesuit presence continued to manifest itself in the Ocean State. Charles F. Risk, who went to Washington as United States Congressman from Rhode Island in 1935 as a Republican, was the brother of Father James E. Risk, S.J., a native of Central Falls, who was ordained a Jesuit priest in 1933. Grant LaFarge, the designer of St. John the Divine in New York City and brother of the Jesuit, died in 1938. Edward W. Flynn, the brother of the former Governor and himself a
graduate of the Class of 1910 from Holy Cross College, was honored, as Chief Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court, with an honorary degree from his alma mater in 1940. Governor J. Howard McGrath of Rhode Island received a similar honor from the same Jesuit school in 1943 (and later from Fairfield University in 1951 when he was United States Attorney General). And Blessed Sacrament Church was reflecting another link between the Jesuits and the Ocean State because of the Novena of Grace in honor of St. Francis Xavier which was conducted annually by members of the Society of Jesus.

Of international significance during the decade of the 1930s was the role played by a native of Newport in preparing an encyclical for Pope Pius XI. In meeting with the pope on 22 June 1938, Father LaFarge, who was commended by the Holy Father for his book, *Interracial Justice*, published the previous year, was asked by Pius XI to help write an encyclical against racism and anti-Semitism. Pius XI instructed the Jesuit to write what he would incorporate into the encyclical if Father LaFarge himself were the pontiff. Assisted mainly by Father Gustave Gundlach, a German Jesuit, Father LaFarge completed the secret assignment by September. Unfortunately, Pius XI died on 10 February 1939 before he was able to promulgate the document entitled *Humani Generis Unitas*. If the details presented in the extensive revelation of this story in the *National Catholic Reporter* for 15 December 1972 cannot be refuted, then it seems that there was perhaps some influence exercised by some Jesuit officials to prevent the Gundlach-LaFarge document from seeing the light of day in the pontificate of Pius XI's successor. Certainly, neither Adolf Hitler nor Benito Mussolini would have been pleased with Father LaFarge's ideas.

Moreover, there was an apparent increase in Jesuit activity during the Keough years. In 1940 Father Georges Desjardins, S.J., a native of Pawtucket, was directing a Woonsocket-based retreat movement for Franco-Americans from Collège Jean-de Brebeuf in Montreal. In 1941 the Jesuits gave four retreats to the clergy of the Diocese of Providence so that they reached 274 priests. During the summer of 1944 and that of 1945, the Jesuits at Holy Cross College rented a summer home at Watch Hill for the members of that Jesuit community. With Jesuits in-
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involved in World War II as Navy chaplains, a handful were assigned to Rhode Island either at the Naval Training Station at Newport or to the Naval Air Station at Quonset between 1944 and 1945. One of Rhode Island’s native sons who did not receive such an assignment was Father Bernard R. Boylan, S.J., a Navy lieutenant who won the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for his heroic conduct on 22 August 1944 in Finschafen Harbor in New Guinea. Although Bishop Keough was well disposed towards allowing Jesuits to work in Rhode Island, he was the only bishop in New England who would not allow them to look for a replacement for Weston College in his diocese when the need arose for this during World War II.

After Bishop Keough was appointed Archbishop of Baltimore in 1947, Russell J. McVinney became Bishop of Providence from 1948 to 1971, and there was a deepening involvement of Jesuits in the Ocean State. Ordained a priest on 13 July 1924 by Bishop John G. Murray, an alumnus of Holy Cross College, Bishop McVinney was awarded an honorary degree by Holy Cross in 1957. If one can judge by his early years, he was kindly disposed to the Jesuits whom he honored by establishing a parish dedicated to one of their saints, St. Robert Bellarmine, at Johnston in 1963.

A number of Rhode Islanders who became Jesuits published books during the McVinney years. Father John Walsh, S.J., a native of Newport, published his *This is Catholicism* in 1959 (one of Father Walsh’s contemporaries wanted to call the book *This was Catholicism!* after the Second Vatican Council). Father Reginald F. O’Neill, S.J., of Woonsocket, who adjusted to the changing church by accepting a professorship as a Jesuit at Fitchburg State College, wrote his *Theories of Knowledge* in 1960 and came out with an edition of *Readings in Epistemology* two years later. And one of the most promising scholars, Father Robert L. Richard, S.J., who died unexpectedly at the age of forty in 1967, produced *The Problem of an Apologetical Perspective in the Trinitarian Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Rome, 1963) and *Secularization Theology* (New York, 1967).

Brown University, which has a history that goes back before the American Revolution, became important for Jesuits from the early years of McVinney’s episcopate. At that time,
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Father Stanislaus J. Bezuszka, S.J., presently Chairman of the Department of Mathematics at Boston College, was the first Jesuit to enroll in a doctoral program at that university. He was followed by Father John W. Flavin, S.J., now Chairman of the Department of Biology at Holy Cross College, and a number of others so that, with the opening of the 1965-66 academic year there were at least six Jesuits engaged in graduate studies at Brown. While some resided in various parishes in Providence, including St. Joseph's, the old center of Jesuit activity, a number also stayed at St. Francis Friary in the city.

The involvement of the Jesuits in the broader life of Rhode Island and the nation emerged during the McVinney years. A handful of Navy chaplains, including Father Bernard J. Finnegan, S.J., who rose to Commander, served at Newport in the United States Navy during the Korean War and its aftermath. Dennis J. Roberts, a graduate of Fordham University in 1927 and a supporter of John F. Kennedy for the Vice Presidency in 1956, was elected Governor of Rhode Island in 1950 and served in that office until 1959. His brother, Thomas H. Roberts, also an alumnus of the same class at that Jesuit institution, became Chief Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court in 1956. Francis B. Condon of Central Falls, a graduate of Georgetown University in 1916, succeeded him as Chief Justice in 1958. Christopher Del Sesto, a 1939 graduate of Georgetown Law, became Governor from 1958 to 1960. Dr. Angelo D'Agostino, a native of Providence who entered the Jesuits as a medical doctor, was ordained a priest in 1966 in what was an historic first in the Ocean State. And, in 1968, Father Thomas D. Culley, S.J., who had received his doctorate in music from Harvard University, became the first Jesuit to hold a teaching position on a professional level at Brown University.

If there was anything that unsettled relations between the Jesuits and Bishop McVinney, it was the candidacy of Father John J. McLaughlin, S.J., for the United States Senate in 1970. Campaigning on the Republican ticket against Senator John O. Pastore (the latter had received an honorary degree from St. Louis University, a Jesuit school, in 1969), a Democrat and a friend of Bishop McVinney of Providence, the Jesuit became the first priest in the history of the nation to run for that
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office (on 2 March 1848, Representative Lewis Charles Levin of Pennsylvania, a member of the American Party, had declared in Congress: "How many Jesuit Senators shall we have in the course of the next twenty years!"). Two months after Father McLaughlin announced his candidacy in his native state (he was born at Edgewood), Bishop McVinney issued a statement in the Providence Visitor on 21 August 1970 informing Catholics that the Jesuit did not have his permission as required by Canon 139 of the Code of Canon Law. Even though Rhode Island was 65% Catholic, the Bishop's disavowal backfired when papers like the Woonsocket Call, Pawtucket Times, Providence Journal and Washington Post defended the priest's right to run for public office and when a group of Catholic laymen, Rhode Island Association of Laity, called the episcopal statement "a political act." Even though Father McLaughlin drove his opponent "batty," to use the word of Washington Post columnist David S. Broder, he was defeated by the veteran politician by 225,000 votes to 107,000. Yet, by cutting Senator Pastore's victory from the 82% that he captured in 1964 to 67.5%, Father McLaughlin did manifest unusual strength.

Father McLaughlin remained very much a part of the Rhode Island scene during the next five years. Although he ran as a peace candidate against the Vietnam War, he was accepted by the Nixon Administration as a member of the White House speechwriting staff the following summer after he was supported for that position by the Jesuit provincial of New England, Father William G. Guindon, S.J. Not only did he do an about-face on the war by staunchly supporting the American bombing of North Vietnam in the presidential campaign of 1972, but he provoked a number of Jesuits by an unusual press conference at the White House on 8 May 1974 defending President Richard Nixon as the tides of the Watergate controversy were overwhelming the President. With Father Robert F. Drinan, S.J., United States Congressman from Massachusetts working for the impeachment of Mr. Nixon, Americans were exposed to a new type of Catholicism that left no doubt about differences of opinions in politics.

In 1971, Bishop Louis E. Gelineau succeeded Bishop McVinney as Bishop of Providence, and the Jesuit relationship
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to Rhode Island was not only evident in Father McLaughlin, who left the White House not long after Mr. Nixon resigned (he obtained his separation from the Jesuits in the following summer), but in other ways. Father Robert F. Taft, S.J., son of the late Judge James L. Taft and brother of Cranston's Mayor, James L. Taft, Jr., both graduates of Holy Cross College, became editor of the prestigious journal *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* in 1973. That same year, Father James J. Drohan, S.J., of Worcester received the Bishop Gelineau Trophy for low gross in a spring golf tournament, and Vincent A. Cianci, a graduate of Fairfield University (1962) and of Marquette University Law School (1966), both Jesuit schools, was elected Mayor of Providence. In 1974 Father Leo P. McCauley, S.J., became involved in retreat work and the charismatic movement at Our Lady of Peace Retreat House in Narragansett where Father Joseph J. LaBran, S.J., began bringing his retreatants from Holy Cross College in 1975. One Jesuit, Father Francis E. Traynor of the Wisconsin Province, was teaching theology at Our Lady of Providence Seminary during the 1975-76 academic year. And Father William J. O'Halloran, S.J., a graduate of LaSalle Academy and former Chairman of the Psychology Department at Holy Cross College, became President of LeMoyne College, a Jesuit school in Syracuse, New York, as 1976 began.

In reflecting, then, on the Jesuit heritage in Rhode Island over almost four hundred years of history, it is clear that there has been an enduring relationship with the Ocean State. It is based not only upon the contributions that individual Jesuits have made to Catholics of the Diocese of Providence but also upon the relationship founded upon some fifty natives of Rhode Island who have served as Jesuits in the history of New England. Yet it is on more than 2000 graduates of Jesuit schools who are playing important roles in the life of the Ocean State that the vitality of the Jesuit heritage in Rhode Island largely depends.