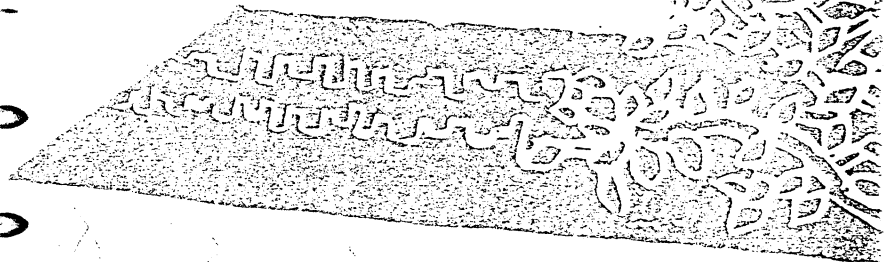
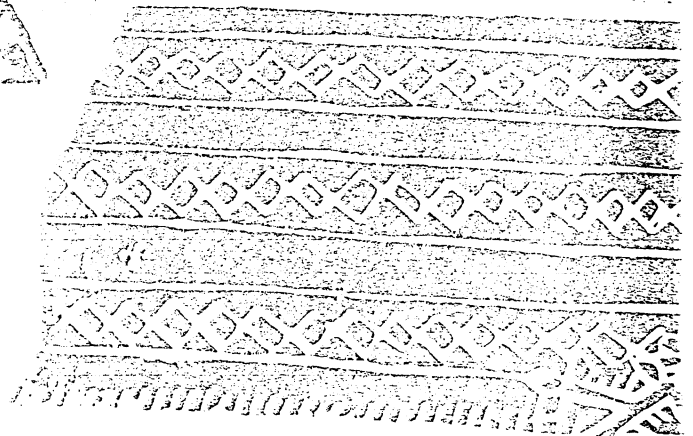
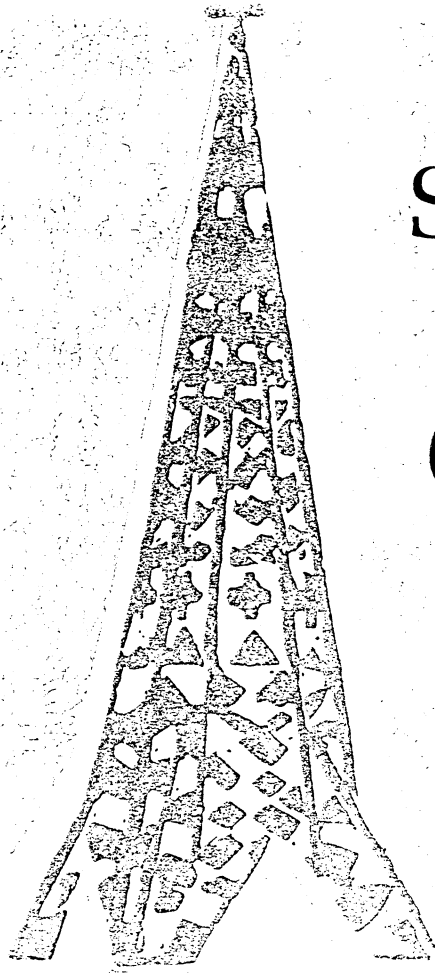


# ST. PAUL'S CHURCH Centennial

1871 — 1971





“ I will give thanks to you in a great church.  
I will praise you in a strong people. ”

### Psalm XXXV

Saint Paul's is a great church. When it was designed and built one hundred years ago, it was hailed as “an excellent example of Gothic architecture . . . 111 feet long and 55 feet, 9 inches wide . . . with room to seat 650 people . . . and a tower 128 feet high.”

But size is not the reason Saint Paul's is a great church. There are far more impressive churches across the land. Saint Paul's is great because of its people. When you come right down to it, a church is more than a building.

### IT IS PEOPLE.

As we celebrate the Centennial of Saint Paul's, we remember the people who contributed to its greatness . . . through their faith and their works. Like the light and heat of a candle, they cannot be separated.

The last one hundred years are sprinkled with the names of many people who labored, each in his own way, to build the religious heritage that is ours today. Men like Thomas Fee and John Hickey; Thomas Buttimer and Cornelius Foley; John Crowe, John Magner, Thomas Murray and other early parishioners. Priests like Father Hugh Smyth and Ambrose Roche; Hugh Mulligan, Peter McCormack, Patrick Quill, and many others. Through their faith and their works, they have given us a great church. They have made us a strong people.

So, it is fitting that we pause, as we start the next one hundred years, and recall what has gone before.

The pages that follow describe people and events of yesterday . . . and today. They are all familiar, because they are all part of our life. And that's what it's all about.



## The First 100 Years . . .

When Thomas Fee arrived in Hingham with his wife and two children from Ireland in 1849, he followed a pattern typical of many other early Catholics who had gone before him. He first lived in a section of Hingham known as The Cove. And he soon learned that Mass was said occasionally at a house in the area (said to be the Hickey House on North Street.) On attending Mass, and apparently knowing the altar boy's responses, he was invited to serve. Religion was an integral part of Tom Fee's life, and in later years he would help build a new Church . . . and serve as sexton of it.

There were not many Catholics in the early days of Hingham. The first ones of record were the Acadians . . . several of whom lived in the house of Cornelius Barnes on Main Street. They were well educated and devout, "worshipping in their own way under the trees upon the grounds." Early church records also show that there were some of English, Scotch, Portuguese and French origin. The majority were Irish. But they all shared one thing in common — a strong Catholic faith. And this love of God brought them together . . . first in gatherings which revolved around the visits of priests like Father Roddan who would travel from Quincy to teach and spread the faith. Later, at various homes and the old Town Hall (then located in Hingham Center) where Mass was said occasionally. In those days, the spiritual needs of "Hingham's Catholic Society" were served by priests who would journey from Quincy or Weymouth by coach or horseback. They would arrive on Saturday to hear confessions; stay overnight at one of the houses, and celebrate Mass on Sunday.

As the Catholic population of Hingham grew, so did the need for a church. And God sent a man to help, Father Hugh P. Smyth: an amazing Irish-born priest, often called the "Apostle of the South Shore," who is part of the heritage of St. Paul's. Father Smyth was Pastor of the original St. Francis Xavier Church in Weymouth; and, in his thirteen years there, he was responsible for building eight churches . . . including St. Paul's in Hingham. Father Smyth was the driving force who marshalled the energies of the Catholic people of Hingham . . . guiding them toward their goal: their own house of prayer.

On August 10, 1866, the "Catholic Society" of the Town purchased the church site from Messrs. Burr, Brown & Co. (The first owner had been Richard Betscome who was granted the land by the town fathers on September 18, 1635.) The purchase price was \$1,700; and the deed was given to Bishop John J. Williams.

Three years passed before actual construction started on the Church itself. Money had to be raised; and this was accomplished largely through fairs, parties and other social functions. It was not until late November in 1869 that ground was broken for the foundation. And the work proceeded slowly . . . with much of the digging done by men and boys\* who labored with picks and shovels as the weather and their own spare time allowed.

On Sunday, June 12, 1870, the cornerstone was blessed; and the foundation slowly took shape throughout the summer and fall. The sills of the new church were laid down on Friday, December 2, and by the last days of December, 1870, there was considerable progress on the framework. By the end of January, 1871, the structure had been boarded. The month of February saw the building of the spire. And on Wednesday, April 12, there was a moment of triumph when the golden cross was set atop the spire and the protective covering removed "at twenty-five minutes of 12."

Catholics assembled in the new building for the first time on Sunday, July 2, 1871, at 10:30 in the forenoon. They met again that afternoon for the selection of family pews. Finally, on July 23, 1871, the church was dedicated.

The church cost \$17,000 when completed. Part of the financing program included the purchase of windows bearing the names of families then in the parish. Family pews were also "bought." Seat money was paid by the quarter or by Sunday collection — a collector passing through the church until about 1926.

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\*Men who worked on the foundation included James Brassel, Jerry Breen, Tom Buttimer, Jonas Casey, John Corbett, Larry Crehan, Dan Daley, John Daley, Pat Delargy, Dan Donovan, Jim Dower, Jim Driscoll, Jim and Tom Fee, Cornelius Foley, Dan Hickey, Redmond Keating, John Magner, John Moore, Pat Murphy, John Tully, Barney Ward and John Welch. Stone carted from local quarries was used to build the foundation walls.

# HINGHAM JOURNAL

September 9, 1870

## The Fair

The fair held in Loring Hall, which commenced on Monday, and terminates this (Friday) evening, for the purpose of raising funds for the building of the Catholic Church, town, will, without doubt, be a complete success. The hall was dressed with a profusion of flowers, by C. M. Roeth of Boston. The attractions are quite numerous, and being filled with saletables presenting a variety of amusements, and being filled with specimens of female handiwork, we shall give full notice in regard to the fair.

# HINGHAM JOURNAL

March 17, 1871

The Catholic Church has been repressed on this structure has been thoroughly examined by one of the best architects in Boston, who pronounces it superior to that of any other similar building of modern built in the State. This speaks well for the contractor, which the contravellers, have well, have

Notice

# HINGHAM JOURNAL

December 16, 1870

The New Catholic Church The floor timbers of this building have been laid and boarded, and work will progress as rapidly as possible. Messrs. Hanson and Hunnewell of Malden, who have built several churches, are the contractors for this edifice, and as their work for thoroughness has heretofore given entire satisfaction, we have no doubt that it will prove so in the present instance. Frederick V. Corsen, of Melrose, is foreman of the work. Good materials are used in its construction and when completed, the structure will present a fine appearance. Mr. Smyth, the pastor of the church, through whose zealous effort the movement of building this church started, devotes all the time of his pastoral duties to the church.

# HINGHAM JOURNAL

June 10, 1870

accommodation of the members of the various Catholic Societies of Boston, adjacent places who wish to attend the laying of the corner stone of the church in Hingham, the steamer "Hingham" will make a trip from Boston, leaving at 12th inst., leaving at 3/4 P. M. and Hingham, will be ready to receive the guests, soon after the close of the day.

Fare: 25 cents

# HINGHAM JOURNAL

May 26, 1871

We learn that the new Catholic Church St. Paul's of this town, will be dedicated on Sunday, July 23. Great preparations for the occasion are being made by the society and others interested.

# HINGHAM JOURNAL

June 24, 1870

The following report of the laying of the corner stone of the new Catholic Church of this town, came to hand too late for last week's issue. Although late, we think it will prove none the less interesting to our readers.

## Laying the Corner Stone

As we announced to our readers last week, the ceremony of the laying of the corner stone of the new Catholic Church to be erected on North Street, took place on Sunday afternoon last and was witnessed by a large concourse of people, amounting at least from three thousand persons. The ceremony was a most interesting one, and was attended by a large number of the clergy and laity of the town and vicinity.

# HINGHAM JOURNAL

April 21, 1871

A horse, belonging to a lightning rod company, attached to a buggy belonging to Mr. Geo. Cushing, 2d., the stable keeper, was frightened while passing the new Catholic Church, at the corner of North Street, and by removing the staging around the tower of that structure, threw out the occupants, two men, opposite the South Street cemetery, who fortunately escaped serious injury. Before the horse was stopped, however, it had essentially smashed up.

# HINGHAM JOURNAL

May 12, 1871

The new Catholic Church, in this village, is rapidly approaching completion. The plastering is completed with the exception of the skin coat, and the carpenter work is nearly done. The structure is nearly completed.

# HINGHAM JOURNAL

July 28, 1871

## Dedication of St. Paul's Church

The dedication of the new church, St. Paul's, which took place on Sunday last, was the occasion of bringing together one of the largest and most respectable congregation of people ever assembled in the town.

The day was one of the very best and brightest of the season, and attracted a numerous throng of people from Hingham and the neighboring towns. In addition to this, the steamer John Romer, brought down a numerous host of our city friends, who embraced the splendid opportunity afforded them of a trip down the harbor to view the new church, about which so much interest is centered and to witness the ceremonies of the dedication.

The consecration of the church commenced a few minutes before eleven o'clock A. M. and was conducted by the Right Rev. Dr. J. J. Williams, Bishop of Boston, assisted by several clergymen from Boston and vicinity.

The Asperges Me Domine, hyssopo, etc., which translated is "Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, O Lord and I shall be cleansed." etc. then followed the singing of the Gloria.

The highlights of the early days of St. Paul's, by the Right Rev. Bishop and clergy, the litany of the saints with the accompanying prayer were recited within the sanctuary.

This being done, the clergy returned to the vestry, and soon afterwards the Mass was celebrated.

Among the clergymen present were the Rev. A. Sherwood Healey, of the Cathedral; Rev. Jas. A. Healey, of St. James, Bosteon; Rev. Peter A. McKenna, of Marlboro; Rev. M. Moran, of Abington; Rev. T. B. McNulty, of North Bridgewater; Rev. John A. Conlon of South Bridgewater; Rev. James McBlue, of Chelsea; Rev. M. Supple of Charlestown; Rev. John B. Purcell, of the Boston Cathedral; Rev. Peter J. Leddey, of Weymouth; and the Rev. Pastor H. P. Smyth.

Among the laity were noticed several prominent Catholic gentlemen from various parts of the country, viz: Patrick Donohoe, Esq., of the Boston Pilot; M. J. McMasters, of the New York Freeman's Journal; John Mitchel, of the New York Citizen; George Ryan, of the Southern Quarterly Review; T. B. McLally, of the Metropolitan Riond; General T. M. Donahoe, of New Hampshire; Cal. Lyons, of the New York Herald; Hon. P. A. Collins, of Boston; Thomas J. Gargan, Esq., treasurer of the Emigrants Savings Bank, Boston; Patrick S. Gilmore, of Peace Jubilee fame; J. B. O'Reilly, of Pilot; S. T. Rankin, of Boston Herald, together with many other distinguished gentlemen from Boston and vicinity. The elite of the Boston Catholic community were present, and taken together it was one of the most respectable gatherings ever seen in Hingham.

The church itself, the corner stone of which was laid more than a year ago, is nearly finished, and as most of our readers are aware, is

# HINGHAM JOURNAL

June 17, 1870

Laying of the Corner Stone of the New Catholic Church The corner stone of the new Catholic Church, North Street, for the Catholic Society of this town, was laid with appropriate religious services, which lasted between two and three thousand spectators, a large number of whom were from Boston and not a few of the prominent clergymen of other denominations being seated during the services.

The Catholics of Hingham have worshipped in the Town Hall and several efforts to build a church failed until Rev. H. P. Smyth took the parish pastorate he has labored indefatigably to establish of worship for his congregation and he received from several of the prominent citizens of the town the edifice will be built of wood with in the Gothic style of architecture from plans of the architect of the Cathedral of the Holy Cross.

The edifice will be 55 feet 9 inches wide and the tower will be finished in black walnut and pews will be two altars and commodious and there will be a Sunday school room and will be used as a Sunday seats for be so constructed as to afford seats for ample room for the Catholic community about 500 persons.

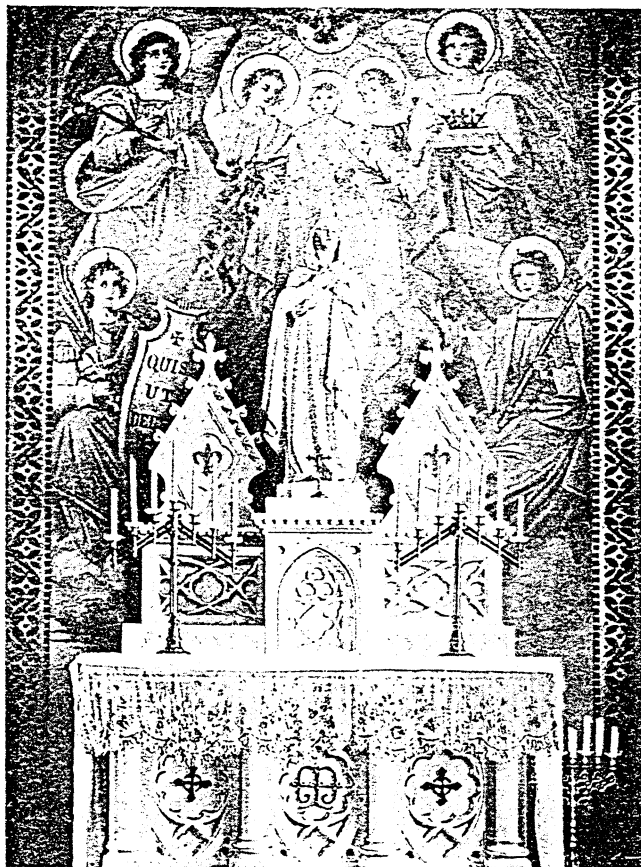
The services Sunday were in the absence of Very Rev. P. F. Lydon V. G., by Michael Supple.

Hingham Journal newspaper clippings capture some of the highlights of the early days of the church had been made by the Right Rev. Bishop and clergy, the litany of the saints with the accompanying prayer were recited within the sanctuary.

This being done, the clergy returned to the vestry, and soon afterwards the Mass was celebrated.







The years following the completion of the church record other accomplishments marking the growth of the parish. In 1873, the lower church was finished and lighted for the first time. On August 15, 1876, St. Paul's was split off from Weymouth and became an independent parish with Father Peter Leddy as the first Pastor.\* The following year, on April 26, 1877, Father Leddy bought the Thaxter home (now the Hingham Community Center) for use as a rectory. And on November 13, 1877, the parish cemetery was purchased and blessed. (That same day, 50 children were confirmed in the parish church.)

Father Gerald Fagan bought the present rectory (the old Albert Fearing homestead) on January 18, 1895. (It is interesting to note that it originally sat close to the street. In 1900, workmen excavated behind it; and the entire structure was moved back about twelve feet where it has remained through the years.)

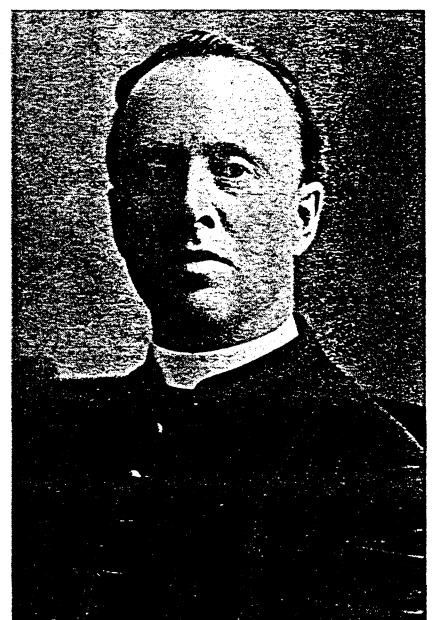
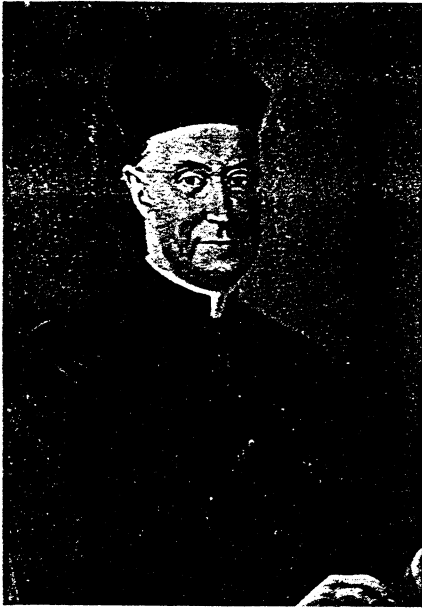
The records of the parish, and recollections of older parishioners give us some insight to conventional as well as major events that affected the church down through the years.

Church records note a "terrible storm" and "no church" on November 27, 1898. Notations by Father Mulligan in 1900 indicate that the debt on St. Paul's Church was down to \$2,000, but the debt on the parish house and land, which had been purchased only 5 years before, was \$10,000. 1910 brought problems with the roof of the church, and Father McCall wrote that "nearly four months were consumed in repairing the roof." In 1918, on October 6 and 13, all churches were closed due to the epidemic of Spanish Influenza which was raging in Massachusetts. On November 21, 1920, at 1:15 in the morning, a fire broke out in the kitchen of the Rectory and destroyed part of the ell and the roof. As a result of the fire, two new rooms were added on the east side, and other changes were made. In 1926, Father MacCormack noticed that the church spire was swaying. Father Edmund Moran, curate, developed the engineering data and plans that were needed to fix it. In 1929, the church was completely redecorated inside. (One parishioner, Hugh Smith, recalls being married that year in a "sea of scaffolding.")

St. Paul's School had its beginning when the Terry Estate on Fearing Road came up for sale and was purchased by Father Quill in 1950. He felt it would be an ideal Convent in the event a parochial school was built. An intense effort, started by the Hingham Knights of Columbus and joined by every church organization, solicited funds for the school. By the Fall of 1951, \$50,000 had been subscribed, and amounts for twice that sum were pledged. Ground was broken on April 8, 1951 and building commenced thereafter. The school is located on the site of the old Hingham Tassel Factory. It has nine grade classrooms, an assembly hall, and is a one-story brick building of modified colonial design.

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\*At this time, St. Paul's parish also included Scituate and Hull. Around the turn of the century, Hull was still a mission administered from St. Paul's. St. Mary's of the Bay had been built and Mass was said there on one Sunday each month in the winter. A priest and one altar boy from St. Paul's would make the trip there by horse and buggy. St. Mary's in Nantasket was not open during the winter, so Catholics from Nantasket came to Hingham by trolley cars which then operated as far down the beach as "Whitehead."





## EARLY PASTORS

Hugh P. Smyth	- to 1876
Peter J. Leddy	1876 - 1880
Gerald A. Fagan	1880 - 1896
Ambrose F. Roche	1896 - 1899
Hugh J. Mulligan	1899 - 1907
Peter F. McCall	1907 - 1926
Peter J. McCormack	1926 - 1930
James F. Haney	1930 - 1936
Daniel F. Sheerin	1936 - 1946
Patrick J. Quill	1946 - 1955
Joseph P. Burke	1955 - 1957
Alfred C. Sheehan	1957 - 1965



It's a little unfair to simply list the men who have played such an important role in the growth of St. Paul's over the last 100 years, but we really don't know that much about them. What little we do know has been gleaned from old newspaper clippings, sparse church records, and the personal recollections of parishioners. Some stand out more than others, perhaps because of their personalities, or the time in which they served. Even so, each one has, in his own way, left his mark on St. Paul's.

This is the way some people remember them —

Father Hugh Smyth — “The tireless church builder. The apostle of the South Shore.”

Father Peter Leddy — “I was a little girl. He came to my house on sick call in a horse and buggy.”

Father Fagan — “Outgoing and very warm. A hard worker.”

Father Ambrose Roche — “Very popular . . . athletic . . . handsome. He loved to drive horses fast. He was catcher on the old Hingham semi-pro baseball team.”

Father Hugh Mulligan — “He was beautiful. He knew people. He had a wonderful brogue; loved to tell stories and was a marvelous speaker.”

Father McCall — “Most priestly man I ever knew.”

Father McCormack — “A great walker. Always had his dog with him.”

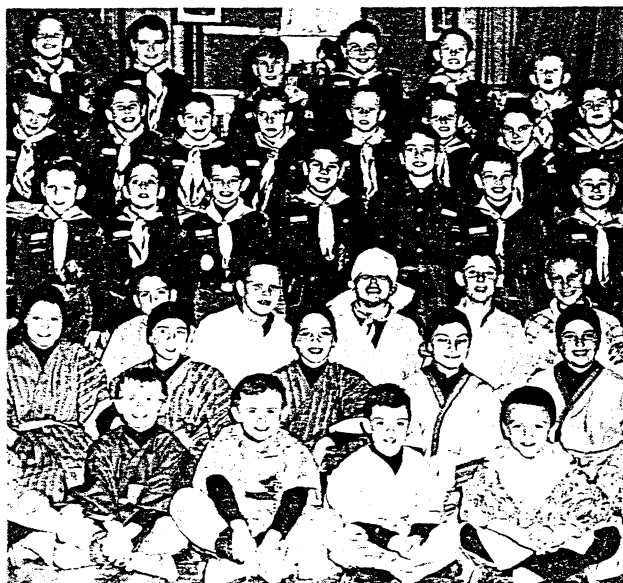
Father James Haney — “Very strict. One of the old timers.”

Father Dan Sheerin — “Very quiet. I also remember the two curates — Fr. Lally and Fr. Finnegan.”

Father Patrick Quill — “He was a dear man . . . good sense of humor. Kind of quiet. Used to walk up Lincoln Street every night with his German Shepherd.”

Father Joseph Burke — “A fine man. Knew everybody. Always went out of his way to greet you.”

Father Alfred Sheehan — “I remember him as a most gentlemanly priest. Very humble . . . a man of God.”



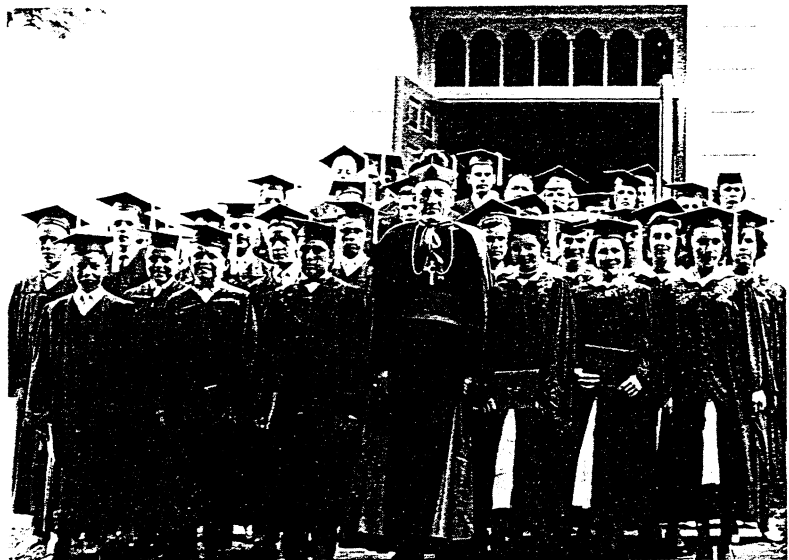
**SOCIAL ACTIVITIES OF THE PARISH THROUGH THE YEARS** express the life style of the age in which the people lived. Before and after St. Paul's church was built, the Catholic people of Hingham held fairs and balls to raise money for the church. The Hingham Journal describes, for example, how steamers brought large groups of Catholics down from Boston to attend many of these gala occasions. Church records note that a fair held in 1890 produced \$2,900; and that income from lawn parties and fairs in 1902 amounted to \$4,022.

The success and appeal of these early functions can be traced to two factors: 1) Hingham enjoyed a large summer population, and this swelled the number of people who were drawn to attend and participate in these social events. 2) A strong, loyal, and active parish membership. The new church became an integral part of their everyday life. It was only natural that they would look to it . . . not only to fulfill their spiritual needs, but also as an instrument by which they could satisfy their emotional and social needs.

Their social life centered around association in the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the Holy Name Society, the St. Vincent dePaul Society, the Dramatic Club, and women's clubs such as the Sewing Club, Ladies Sodality, St. Paul's Guild, and Catholic Women's Club. Entertainment consisted of lawn parties, card parties, dances, parish reunions, field days at Cronin Field, St. Patrick's Day celebration, and minstrel shows held in Loring Hall and Sanborn Auditorium.

Minstrel shows and musicals were especially popular in the Twenties and early Thirties; and they mirrored the times. In 1920, a "musical extravaganza," held under the auspices of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, was tied to Irish freedom. (This was at the height of "the troubles.") One typical ad in the show program was a full-page message: "In memory of Terence MacSwiney, Lord Mayor of Cork, who sacrificed his life for the ideal of Irish independence."

Many activities also embraced the Youth of the parish, particularly with the opening of a parochial school in 1952. Picnics, CYO baseball, basketball, boy scouts, beach outings, father-son Communion breakfasts, retreats, Christian doctrine sessions, and a wide range of other events were aimed at generating and sustaining a strong parish unity for young and old alike.



# TODAY: 1971

"This is the church . . .  
Here's the steeple . . .  
Open the doors . . .  
. . . and see all the people!"

Yes . . . the people of St. Paul's. And they haven't changed from the people who went before us. They still have a strong love of God . . . of Christ . . . and the church. Because we live in a different time, we express it in a different way. Today, the church has changed . . . and yet it has not changed. The essentials are still there. There is a bond with the past, and yet there is hope and excitement for the future.

You see it at St. Paul's.

Outwardly, the church looks pretty much the way it did in 1871. Inside . . . the decor, the altar, the new corpus reflects the new church.

The figure of Christ over the altar . . . symbolizing the Crucifixion and the Resurrection . . . the end and the beginning. The Second Vatican Council and the Universal church . . . and St. Paul's.

Yes, the church has changed . . . to reach man as he actually is in his contemporary world.







There are changes in the Liturgy. There is a parish council. We see lay readers . . . community baptism. New forms: a "Sunday" mass on Saturday afternoon at 5 O'Clock. We see C.C.D. classes based on life and living. The old catechism is gone. In its place: slide films and movies, guest speakers, and dialogue . . . not only in C.C.D. classes, but in discussions with youth at home, on the baseball field, outside Brigham's or in front of Donovan's Drug Store.

We see the Sisters doing more with children, and their parents. We see men and women working together — to build a July 4th float, plan a dance, or organize and execute something as momentous as the Centennial celebration. We see softball teams and family picnics; altar boys outings and May processions.

We see the Pastor, the curates and the deacon putting in long hours, saying mass, administering the sacraments; comforting the sick and the dying; counseling the troubled; listening and helping . . . whenever they can.

The church is a visible society organized for a spiritual end, and in that sense, St. Paul's has not changed from yesteryear. If anything, it is more "visible" today than it has ever been. There is a deeper involvement by people. Why? Probably because of the realization that full participation in the whole life of the church is the only way to full membership in the mystical body of Christ.

These few pages illustrate some of the parish activities that are part of today's pattern of church life. They are visible, and they are necessary, because religion must take concrete forms.

But there are also other forms. The Mass and Communion are still the cornerstones of Catholic action. The Liturgy "is the crowning glory of the mystical body of Christ (the church)." And since religion "is a binding of man to God," there is prayer . . . the very substance of Christian life.

We see prayer in all forms.

A young boy . . . hurriedly . . . squeezing God into a "busy" day.

A young father . . . "Dear God, help me to be a good father, a good husband, and a good man."

In the confessional — "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned . . ."

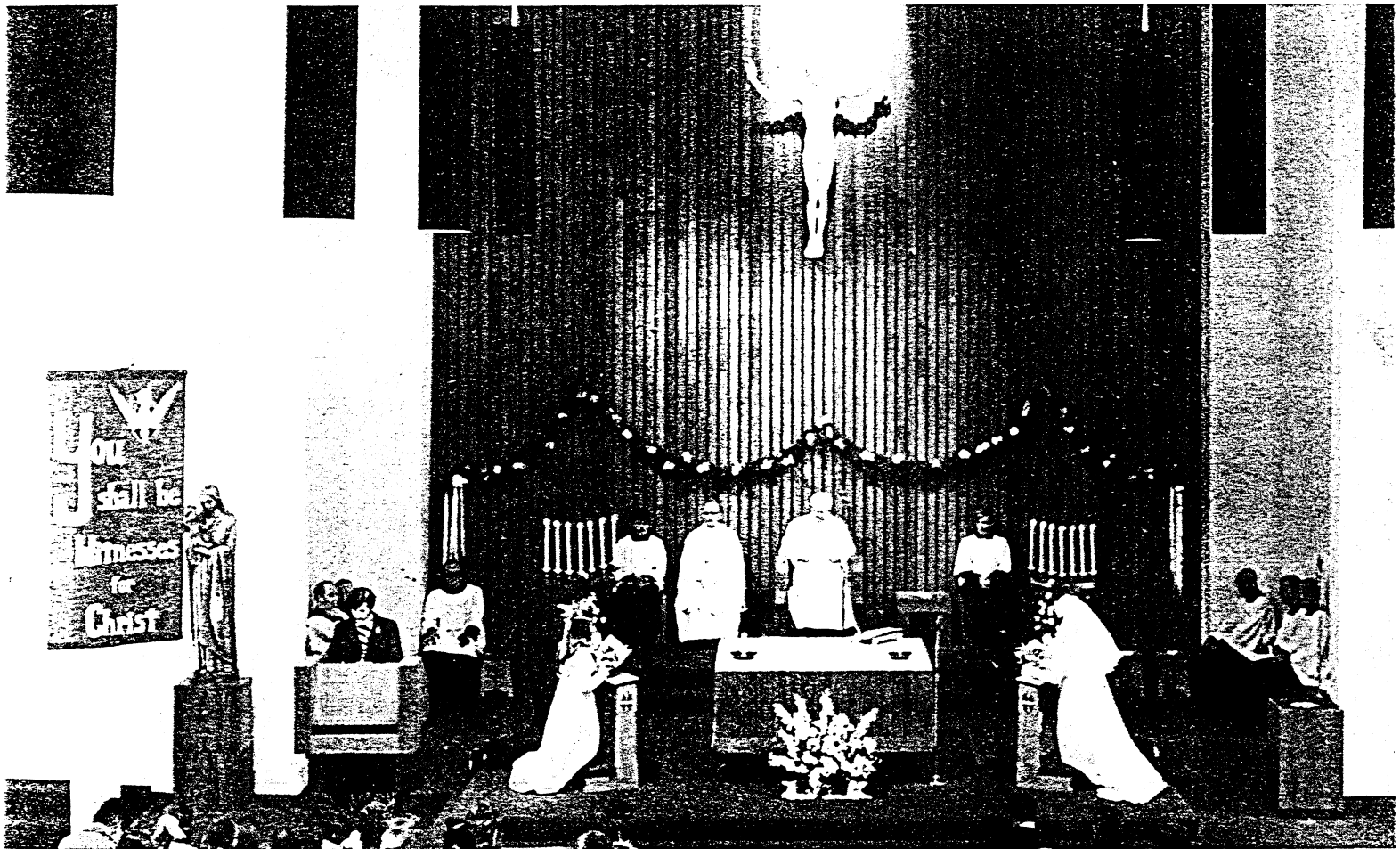
Prayer is our link to God. We ask Him to bless us when we are born, when we are baptized, confirmed, married or ordained, and when we face death. Prayer is also an everyday thing; because we realize, as the church banner says so succinctly: "today is the first day of the rest of our lives."

So, today, in St. Paul's, Hingham, the really important things still guide us into our second century. A great church . . . and a strong people . . . and a deep love for Christ.

God has been good to us.













# THE FUTURE:

An interview with  
Reverend Monsignor John J. Sheehan S.T.L.  
August, 1971



Monsignor Sheehan was ordained on December 8, 1937, and has spent most of his priesthood in parish work. He served on the faculty of St. John's Seminary for six years prior to being named Pastor of St. Paul's church on February 25, 1965. In October of 1967, Cardinal Cushing also appointed him Episcopal Vicar for Plymouth County.

Monsignor, there have been a lot of changes in the church, and St. Paul's, the last few years. When you look to the future, it's natural to wonder what will happen five, ten, fifty years from now. Do you see any other changes coming along?

I'm sure that the people who watched the setting up of the cross on the church in 1871 had high hopes for the future; but they couldn't possibly imagine what has taken place in the church over these last one hundred years. As we look to the future, we can speak with the same confidence and security that they had. When it comes to specifically naming what is likely to happen, it's . . . difficult.

Well, there's been a greater involvement, for example, on the part of people. Do you see even more?

Yes. One thing that will happen definitely is a change of mood in the church. For example, when St. Paul's church was built, the people had a great deal of internal courage and security. This is indicated by the size of the church they built . . . far beyond their needs. Today, we have spent time in the parish, and in the whole church, in self-examination. This has prevented us from moving out into the world and accomplishing the great things the church is capable of doing. And I think that, very soon, both at the level of the universal church and the local church, we are going to see an end to that process of self-examination and self-adjustment. We will see a return of the courage and outward-looking frame of mind that generally characterizes the church.

Well, if there will be a self-involvement on the part of people, are there any specific ways they will? For example, we've seen the deacons come to St. Paul's, we've seen lay readers . . . the parish council. Are there any other changes you can see coming?

Yes. There's a great deal of talent in the people of the church. You will see a better use of that talent. Also, a better sense of the possibility of service. It's very interesting, for example, that when the deacon program started, most people thought of the deacon as someone for whom we were doing something. We were giving him a chance to try himself out for size. Gradually, this has reversed. Now we see the deacon as a man who serves the community. He's part of what's going on. The same thing is going to happen in areas like the parish council. There's going to be a much greater conviction that the parish council is not merely an experiment we're trying out. It is a legitimate, on-going part of church life. I think we'll see a great deal more confidence, expertise and acceptance.

What about the work of the parish council? Has it been good?

Yes. We're fortunate here. The makeup of our parish council has been excellent. We have people with considerable experience . . . that they've been able to bring to bear in the council. In the church we're moving from a running of the parish by a pastor and priests who did everything — serving as builder, expeditor, administrator, as well as priest. There's going to be a gradual transfer of these functions to lay people, and this will be through the parish council.

That brings up another question, Monsignor. What is the major role of a priest today? Has it changed? Will it change more . . . especially with the decline in the number of priests?

It is changing. The priest is going to have more time to serve the people exactly as a priest. Looking back . . . when our people were largely an immigrant people, the priest fulfilled many functions that were not really his. But this was a temporary thing and the moment for it has passed.

Will the concept of a parish, as such, change?

There's been a great deal written about this, but I doubt it. People live in a place; therefore, whatever happens to people happens in a place. I don't see how the church could continue on except by doing the greater part of her work in some territorial fashion, and we call it the parish.

In talking with people, do you see any longing for "the good old days"?

Individuals, yes. In general, no. I suspect that when people talk about the good old days, they're looking back to reacquire the security they had; not the external things. If we trust in the Lord, in the guidance of the church and the Second Vatican Council, we can have that same security and confidence in new forms and new ways.

So you envision, then, the parishioners with all of their talent taking over more of the day-to-day administration and problems affecting the physical side of the church, so that you can devote more time to the spiritual.

That's a fair answer. There are some things that a layman could handle equally well, perhaps better.

What about physical growth, Monsignor. In 1871 there were a handful of people. Three to four hundred, I guess. Now we have about 1500 families. Do you see any future growth?

Yes. Even apart from any numerical growth, I think there will be a relative increase in Catholics . . . by way of people moving into town.

The immediate impact of growth like that would be on the school, wouldn't it?

That's right. No one, for example, in 1870 and for many decades afterwards, would have foreseen a parish in South Hingham. It's almost certain that sometime in the future there's going to be a breaking up of large concentrations of Catholics. This has been the history of the past, and it's going to be part of the future.

You've been here a number of years now. What is your single impression about the direction St. Paul's is going?

I have a very good feeling about St. Paul's. I find it a very friendly community. There's a deep personal relationship among the people themselves, and with their priests and the Sisters. So, my impression is that there's quite a warm feeling in the parish and a legitimate pride as a valid way of expressing their interest. It's a very happy parish in which to be a priest.

What is St. Paul's greatest need?

One that is characteristic of the whole church: the question of how we are handing on the Faith. You can call it C.C.D., Christian education or whatever, but it's obvious that parents are much more involved than at any other time in the past. This same pattern is going to hold true about transfer of the Faith. So, part of the solution to the so-called C.C.D. problem will be an even greater involvement of parents. The work that has to be done in that area is probably our major work.

What about the youth of the parish? I know that Father Geoghan has done a lot of work with the kids . . . and they are the future.

Yes, they are. We're fortunate that the curates have a fine rapport with young people . . . and this is obvious as you go about town. They greet you; talk to you; and, this says something.

They have many needs, and we have a great deal of work to do to satisfy their needs. Priests who visit the parish are very impressed by the attendance of young people at Mass on Sunday. I see in this an indication, not that we don't have any problems, but in general we're happy. Our great need is to make the Faith appealing to young people; to convey to them a conviction about it which their forefathers had. I think they are quite capable, willing and open to this kind of guidance.

I know you alluded to this earlier; but in general, if people are the church . . . are what make it move . . . how can they shape and guide it to do God's work?

For the past ten years, in the church in general and therefore in St. Paul's we have lived through a period of self-examination with a certain amount of apprehension. Why? Because any time we indulge in self-observation we raise questions about ourselves. And questions indicate a certain fear, or indecision. The



great thing we need to do . . . and that we will do . . . is to recover a real deeply felt conviction that the hand of God is with the people of God in St. Paul's church. This is the fact. With that firmly grasped, we can do very great things for God and for people.

It seems to me that the day-to-day responsibilities and ministrations of a priest have increased and changed from the days of a Father Leddy or a Father Mulligan. Will they change even more?

Yes. The priests of a hundred years ago lived in an agricultural society, so their life-style fitted in with the times. Our day is faster moving. One new dimension added to the church in our time is the mobility of people. Ten percent of the people who are in the parish now won't be here next year. They will be in a different parish — someplace else.

That sort of turnover causes a problem in communications, doesn't it?

Yes. It makes a parish start to think beyond its own borders. In other words, it can't plan and operate as if there were no others in the world.

Do you see more of the things like St. Joseph's in Roxbury happening . . . where we get involved with other parishes? Is this in the future?

Very definitely. It has been in the past of the church, so obviously it's going to be in the future. The people who started this parish, and the ethnic groups that came into it later, all had a strong missionary spirit and a deep interest in other people, other places, at other times. I feel strongly that, in the not-too-distant future, we will see a tremendous outpouring of interest and energy that will take people beyond the horizons of the parish.

I know that you want this Centennial Celebration to be a happy occasion for all parishioners. What do you hope it accomplishes?

To look back is to be reassured. Even a man who has had many difficulties and trials in his life . . . and has survived them . . . is reassured when he looks back. This should be the principal outcome of our Centennial Celebration. We look back to where we have been, and how far we have come, happily and successfully. And from that memory we reassure ourselves about the future.

We've touched on many things — people, growth, education. Now I'd like to focus on the spiritual. Do you have any comments on spiritual needs that we haven't covered previously?

Yes. In the seminary today . . . among younger

priests . . . there is a tremendous revival of interest in prayer. When you change an external, there is some danger of throwing away the content; and, to some extent, that has happened in the church. Then, of course, the content has to be recovered, even if it is put in a new package. We've gone through a great deal of intellectual analysis over the past ten years, but this is not Christian life. It is about Christian life. Christian life is actually people who have prayer for the Lord, and concern for loving one another in Christ. This is where the real future of the church is. It means that the deep-down convictions that a person has about God and God's creatures are not just up in his mind. They are part of himself, part of his very fibre. And because he has that, he becomes a Christlike person. He looks at things the way Christ looks. He looks at the Father and at people the way Christ does. This gives a great dynamism and energy to his life as a christian. In the past, this was expressed in certain devotions or activities . . . the Propagation of the Faith, for example. The format of these may not be the same in the future, but the content will still be there. It has to be.

Well, I guess any day is a good day for self-renewal; but a hundred years is a good time to put it all back in place again in your own mind.

That's right. And tradition is experience. The experience of the church in trying to communicate the life and the way of Christ to people demands conviction, which we call Faith; it demands a willingness to sacrifice, which is the imitation of the Cross; and it demands a giving of ourselves, without counting the cost.

Monsignor, I'd say those three things sum up what a saint is.

Just about.

As a conclusion, I'd like to say that the faith has always meant for people a great conviction about the loving care of God for them and a sense of the very special place that our Blessed Mother occupies for them in the life of the church — as the Mother of Christ, and as the most perfect Christian. Whatever form our devotion takes in the future, whatever form that our liturgy takes, the heart of it will be a great personal devotion to Christ, and to the Mother of the Lord.

So, the forms have been examined for the past ten years; but one of the signs that the church is moving forward again is the growing personal love of Christ — the same center — and a growing personal love of Mary, as the example of what the perfect follower of the Lord is.

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St. Paul's Church

Hingham, Mass.

September 11, 1971

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The contributions of time and talent given so generously by the many members of the parish and the community to the success of this Centennial Celebration are acknowledged with grateful thanks.

