



# Barquilla de la Santa Maria

BULLETIN of the Catholic Record Society -  
Diocese of Columbus

Vol. XX, No. 4

April, 1995

## The Church in Ohio Prior to 1868

by Donald M. Schlegel

(Based on a talk given at Marysville Our Lady of Lourdes in February, 1994)

"In the beginning God created heaven, and earth," but if we start the story with these words from Genesis, it will never be finished. We can start nearer the other end of the Bible, with these majestic words, in the old translation: "Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." (Matthew, 28:19-20)

This is the story of the grand sweep of events, of the Bishops and dioceses in Ohio, up to about the end of the Civil War and the erection of the Diocese of Columbus. It begins with the words of Our Lord to his Apostles, the first bishops, that established their mission and that of today's bishops: to bring the grace of the sacraments to the world and to teach the morality that is in harmony with our human nature and our dignity as children of God. The story will focus on how the bishops who figure in our history, here in Ohio, have strived to carry out that mission.

When the Church first arrived anywhere in northeastern North America, it was brought by the French. The city of Quebec was founded by Champlain in the 1630s and the missionaries who accompanied his expedition were under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Rouen, who governed the Church in New France through

vicars-general. In 1658 the Holy See appointed Francois de Laval de Montmorency as vicar-apostolic of French North America. In 1674 the Diocese of Quebec was erected and this same Laval was its first bishop. He and his successors had charge of the Church, such as it was, in the Ohio Valley, until the American Revolution. Laval's concern for the spiritual well-being of his people led him to travel throughout his huge diocese working with the colonists and Indians, often energetically fighting against the governors and traders because of their abuses of the native people. He founded the seminary in Quebec in 1663 and the School of Arts, Trades, and Agriculture some eight leagues away. He, who might be considered our first bishop, was beatified in 1980.

As for formal religious practices, not much is recorded in Ohio, until in 1749 Captain Pierre Joseph Celoron de Blainville made an expedition down the Allegheny and Ohio Rivers, up the Miami, across to the site of Fort Wayne, and down the Maumee River to Lake Erie. He placed lead plates at various locations to renew the claim of France to the Ohio watershed. With him was Rev. Joseph Pierre Bonnecamps, S.J., mathematician and scientist. It is probable that the first Masses in what is or was our diocese were offered by him, when the lead plates were buried at the mouths of the Muskingum and Scioto rivers, at the former on the feast of the



*Bl. Francois de Laval, Bishop of Quebec*

Assumption and at the latter on Sunday, August 24, 1749. (Bonnecamps, by the way, drew the first map of Ohio from the notes he took on this trip.)

The first Catholics of Ohio were not French, however, but Native Americans, who had received the Faith from the French Jesuits. From the early 1700s until 1780 a band of Delaware, Wyandot, and Munsey, displaced from the east, lived at the forks of the Muskingum (near the present Coshocton). They perhaps were never visited there by a priest, but they had been taught by the Jesuits and retained their preference for the Catholic faith -- despite the efforts of the famous Moravian missionaries in the 1770s to make Protestants of them. Many of them were massacred in 1780 by an American force and many of those who survived drifted away.

From the 1740s until the 1820s, Catholic Native Americans were living in the valleys in northwest Ohio that drain into Lake Erie -- the Maumee,

Portage, Sandusky, etc. They were cared for by priests from Detroit and its missions.

After the American Revolution, ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the territory west of the Appalachians and south of the Great Lakes was uncertain between Quebec and V. Rev. John Carroll, prefect-apostolic of the United States, but the two centers of authority worked together, rather gingerly, for the good of the area; neither really had resources to spare. In November of 1789 an apostolic brief removed this territory from the jurisdiction of Quebec and assigned it to Carroll and on the next day, the Papal Bull was issued that erected Baltimore as the first diocese in this country. Carroll was appointed its first bishop. In the next two decades, Catholics from Europe or of European ancestry began to settle in Ohio. The earliest routes into the territory were the Ohio River and Zane's Trace.

Gallipolis, on the River, was founded by the French in 1790, and the Faith was never completely lost there, though the people did not cooperate with the priests who visited from time to time and it was many decades before a parish was formed.

Irish Catholics were living at Steubenville by 1792 and at Youngstown by 1797 and soon others were settled along Zane's Trace, running west from Wheeling through Zanesville, Lancaster, and Chillicothe down to Maysville, Ky. Other Irish settled in Cincinnati in 1805. Pennsylvania-German Catholics were also found along the trace, as well as in Canton. Catholics of English descent, from the Catholic "Mountain Community" in western Maryland, settled in Knox County and others, from Maryland's Eastern Shore, settled in Fayette County. Letters from two of these groups, the Pennsylvania Germans of Lancaster, represented by Jacob Dittoe, and those from the Eastern Shore, were sent to Bishop Carroll, begging for the ministrations of a priest -- but as yet, no priest

was available to send to them. (In 1785, Carroll had reported to Rome that there were 15,800 Catholics with 19 priests in Maryland, 7,000 with five priests in Pennsylvania, and fewer than 1,500 Catholics in New York and 200 in Virginia, with no resident priests.) Bishop Carroll had his hands full, building his cathedral and seminary, trying to find priests and build churches for the older, established settlements, where Catholics were numerous enough to support them.

One of these areas of established settlement was Kentucky, to which the pioneers of European descent had come much earlier than to Ohio. Strong communities of Catholics from Maryland came west as groups at an early date and settled in various parts of Nelson County, near Bardstown. The first known Catholics came west in 1775 and the first Catholic church was built in 1792. There also was located a community of Dominican friars, sent there by Bishop Carroll. The Dominicans at Bornhem, Belgium, were forced from that country by an invasion of the French Republicans in 1794 and they went to England. From there, in 1804 they came to this country under the leadership of Rev. Edward



*Bishop John Carroll*

Dominic Fenwick, son of an old Maryland family. In 1805 they received the permission of all of the ecclesiastical superiors necessary to found their province and college and in 1806 Bishop Carroll sent them to Kentucky. They purchased 500 acres near Springfield, in Washington County, and founded there their convent, under the patronage of St. Rose of Lima.

### **Bishop Flaget**

On April 8, 1808, at the urging of the American clergy, Pope Pius VII erected four new dioceses in this country, including that of Bardstown, Kentucky. This new diocese consisted of the entire states of Kentucky and Tennessee, with the U.S. territory northwest of the Ohio River attached temporarily. Rev. Benedict Joseph Flaget, a French Sulpitian, was named its first bishop. He was "of tender piety, gentle disposition, and well versed in theology"; his manners were "full of sweetness and charity." His modern biographer calls him a man "who was such an exact copy of his gentle divine Master, who stimulated emulation on the part of the hierarchy, who set all France agog, who aroused the admiration of the College of Cardinals and the affection of several popes, and who was even credited with working miracles." (Schaunger, foreword)

Flaget had come to this country in 1792 and had already served some years on the frontier, in the old French settlements in Illinois. Called back to the east, he taught at Georgetown College and Bishop Carroll's seminary in Baltimore. When his appointment as Bishop of Bardstown was rumored, he went to France to escape this fate, if possible, but the Pope insisted; and so, while in France, he sought priests for his new diocese and brought with him three priests and two seminarians. He was consecrated in Baltimore by Bishop Carroll in November of 1810 and, before the four bishops of this country went home from that city, it was agreed that they

would meet in Baltimore no later than November 1, 1812 for a provincial council.

In May of 1811, delayed because he lacked even money to travel, Flaget came west to take charge of his diocese, where (in Kentucky and Tennessee) there were some six thousand Catholics and seven priests. He administered the first ordination west of the Alleghenies; confirmed about onethousand, held a diocesan synod; and began to consider the necessary projects of seminary, convent, and cathedral. The Sisters of Loretto and the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth were formed in Kentucky in 1812, both for the religious education of girls.

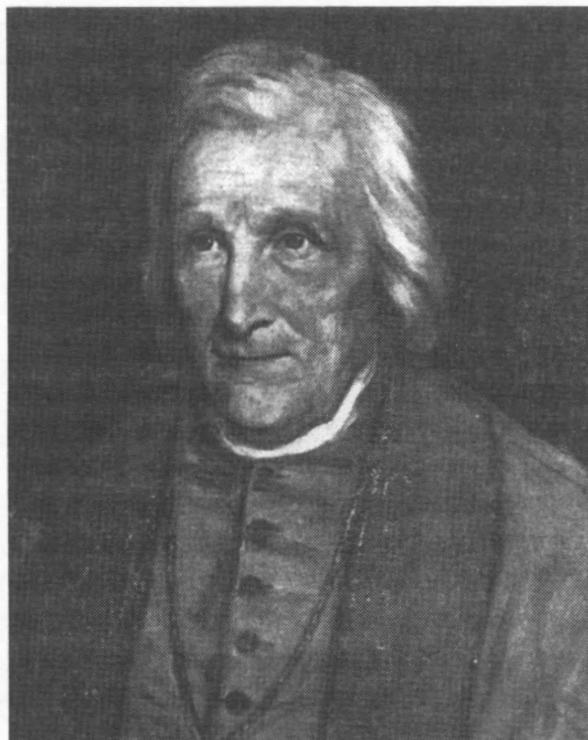
Meanwhile, in Ohio, the few Catholic settlers were daily in danger of losing their faith for want of the sacraments and the teaching of the Church. Either Archbishop Carroll or Bishop Flaget, probably the former, told the Dominican, Father Fenwick, to search for Jacob Dittoe and his family while traversing the Trace from Baltimore towards Kentucky. In 1808 or 1810, Fenwick, travelling west along the Trace, stopped for the night at Fink's tavern at Middletown, where the school stands at the eastern end of Somerset. In the morning, after paying his bill and mounting his horse, he asked Mr. Fink if he knew of any Catholic in the direction he was going. John Fink told him of some that he knew, and, to the priest's great surprise, told him that he and his family were Catholics, though they had not seen a priest since leaving Conewago in Pennsylvania some six years before. The priest was overjoyed and asked directions to Dittoe's house -- the wives of Fink and Dittoe were sisters -- and soon was on his way down the trace.

A short distance away, however, he was almost lost in the woods until he heard the sound of an axe. Following that sound, he soon arrived at the Dittoe home, the goal of his journey, and the next day, the whole community having been gathered together, instructed, and no doubt their accumulations of sins forgiven, Father Fenwick

offered Mass for them. Ever afterwards, recounting this experience would bring tears to his eyes. Thereafter, he generally visited Ohio every other year, and then every year, until at last he made his residence here.

Bishop Flaget, as mentioned above, had promised to return to Baltimore for a provincial council in 1812. The council was called off, but too late for Flaget to receive word, and that Fall he and Father Stephen Badin (the first priest ordained in the United States) set out and came up the Trace through Ohio. Bishop Flaget has left a journal of that trip wherein he describes how Father Badin, on the road, shouted right and left that he was a Catholic priest and thus found any Catholics who lived nearby. Some, and their condition, are described in the journal. The journal goes on in this manner, until upon resting at the Dittoes' the Bishop wrote:

We went to spend the night with Mr. Dittoe, an excellent Catholic who keeps an inn on the road.



*Bishop Benedict Joseph Flaget*

This faithful believer has already bought, conjointly with one of his brothers, 320 acres of land for the location of a priest. He has already built a little house on it and cleared ten acres. In three years he hopes to have thirty acres cleared. I promised him that I would try to send them a priest, at least once a year until Providence would permit me to give them one permanently. I advised Mr. Dittoe to build a house which would be at the same time a house for the priest and a chapel, and he is going to do it. This chapel could also serve as a place where the Catholics might gather together every Sunday, thus serving to draw them closer in the bonds of charity, and reminding them of their duties as Catholics. The Catholics at New Lancaster, or near Mr. Dittoe's, are in sufficient numbers to form a very respectable congregation, and with the taste that the Germans have for music, I am

very sure that divine services there would be held with a great deal of beauty and dignity. All the children of Mr. Dittoe are musicians, and at this moment while I am writing they are making a chorus of melody which pleases me very much. God of all goodness, send me priests!

Suddenly, the journal entries stop! For the remainder of the trip, the good Bishop entered just two sentences concerning the Mountain Congregation in Maryland. We can almost see him, on his horse, silent, his mind far away on another plane, continuing his prayer for priests to help carry out his mission. How much Dittoe had offered the Church, and how little the Bishop could offer in return!

(To be concluded)

-----

### Abstracts from *The Catholic Telegraph*

*The Catholic Telegraph* was founded by Bishop Fenwick of Cincinnati in 1831, its primary object being "to aid in diffusing a correct knowledge of the Roman Catholic faith. By doing this, we are conscious of discharging a two-fold duty; namely, 'of contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints;' and of removing some of the difficulties which prevent our dissenting brethren from rendering that justice to the *ancient faith*, which a correct knowledge of its tenets would, generally, lead them to concede." Given this purpose, it is not surprising that this weekly "newspaper" carried little news in its early days. Its eight pages typically might contain one, or occasionally two, small stories or advertisements relating to the development of the fabric and society of the Church in Ohio. Less often than once a year, the story of the bishop's visitation of the diocese might appear. In this series such items that concern the areas now and formerly associated with the Diocese of Columbus will be abstracted and presented to the readers of the *Bulletin*.

October 22, 1831

[Bishop Fenwick returned on the 22nd last, from a tour of his diocese lasting nearly five months. For the most part, he had journeyed unattended by any of his clergy. He visited nearly all of the Catholic congregations in Ohio and Michigan. His visits to Mackinaw, L'Arbre Croche, Green Bay, and St. Joseph's River (on the southwest extremity of Lake Michigan) are described.]

October 29, 1831

[Continuation of the story of Fenwick's journey. After visiting Detroit, he went to Canton, Ohio.]

Here he found the congregation much increased, under the pastoral care of the Rev. Mr. Hennie. Three new churches were commenced within twenty miles of Canton, a fourth near Norwalk, in Huron County; and a fifth in Tiffin, a new and flourishing county seat in Seneca.

From Canton, he visited St. Joseph's in Perry County, the residence of some Dominican Fathers, who have charge of the mission in that quarter. Here there is a large and highly respectable congregation, among whom the Bishop confirmed seventy. Wearied with

incessant labor, and constant exposure he was attacked with a violent fever, which confined him here for some weeks, but we are happy to state his perfect recovery. As soon as he was able to undergo the fatigue of travelling, he set out from Somerset for his episcopal residence in Cincinnati...

March 10, 1832  
[Advertisement]

**YOUNG LADIES' SEMINARY**  
ST. MARY'S SEMINARY, situate in Somerset, Perry County, Ohio, having been enlarged by the addition of a commodious three story building, is now in a condition to accomodate Fifty Boarders, and about the same number of Externs. The site is healthy and commanding; affording, also, extensive and agreeable walks and play-grounds for the pupils. The Institute is conducted by a community of religious ladies of the Order of St. Dominic. The Catholic Religion is professed; but pupils of all denominations are admitted, with the single condition of submitting to the scholastic discipline of the Seminary. The course of education and principles of discipline are the same as have been adopted and practised upon with so much success, by the Ladies of the Visitation, in their celebrated academy of Georgetown, D.C.

The System of Education embraces the English and French Languages, Orthography, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Geography with the Use of the Globes, History, Rhetoric, Plain Sewing, Marking, and Ornamental Needle Work, Music on the Piano Forte, Drawing, Painting, Fancy Work and Embroidery.

[There follow the terms of payment.]

April 7, 1832  
[Bishop Fenwick left Cincinnati on October 18, 1831 for the east, to lay the cause of the Native Americans before the Secretary of War. He also visited Baltimore, Emmitsburg, Philadelphia, and some of his family in Maryland.]

### Return of the Bishop

It affords us great pleasure to announce the arrival of our venerable Bishop. He reached this place last Saturday, after a long absence, during which he has been unremittingly employed in providing for the advancement of the great cause of religion in the western world. On his way home he visited Zanesville, Somerset and Lancaster, in each of which places he administered the Sacrament of Confirmation, although but a short period had elapsed since he paid them a visit for that purpose. He arrived at Zanesville on the 7th of March and on Sunday the 11th, confirmed 22 persons, of whom 6 were converts to the Catholic Faith. Leaving Zanesville for Somerset on the 13th, he there confirmed 28, 2 being converts. In the latter place 80 had received the Sacrament of Confirmation in the fall. At Lancaster, where he was on the 25th, he confirmed 6, of whom 2 were converts. On all these occasions he went through a great share of the labour, nor did he neglect to pay a paternal visit to all the catholic families in those places. He was every where received with that affectionate regard, to which he exhibits such irresistible claims, by his amiable and paternal deportment....

April 14, 1832

### STEUBENVILLE

We feel pleasure in announcing, that the first stone of the Roman Catholic Church was laid in this place on yesterday by the Rev. Mr. M'Grady, Pastor of St. Paul's church, near New Lisbon, assisted by James Ross, Esq., of Pittsburg, who made a donation of the ground, consisting of two lots. The situation is handsome and well calculated for such an edifice. the building we understand is forty-five feet by thirty -- and is to be erected in Gothic stile. It will be completed in the course of the summer. The plan is tastefully drawn, and we dare venture to say, that for its size, its equal will not be found in the Western Country. - *Steubenville Democrat*, April 4.

(To be continued)

## Chillicothe St. Mary's Church

### Baptismal Register, 1835-1846

(Continued from vol. XX, No. 3)

1845, continued

page 71

March 2 Edward, son of Anthony Barleon and Mariana Zitterly; spons. Edward and Helen Barleon.

same day Maria, born Feb. 22, daughter of Samuel Heckinger and Josepha Roeder; spons. Basil Bogenschitz and Maria Heckinger. J. M. Young

March 3 John, born the last day of last year, son of Thomas McNally and Hester Anna Rock; spons. John McNally and Mary Bauman. JMY [in a different hand than the previous!]

March 23 Thomas, son of Patrick Flanergan and Margaret his wife, born March 17; spons. Daniel Holmes. J. B. Emig, S.J.

same day John, son of Valentine Brader and his wife Clara, born Feb. 25; spons. Mathias Reilly. JBE

same day John, son of Celestine Herrmann and his wife Gertrude, born March 5; spons. Lucas Keller. JBE

same day Theresa, daughter of Philip Hartlaub and his wife Anna Maria, born Feb. 15; spons. Theresa Hirn. JBE

March 29 Maria, daughter of Christoph Leister and his wife Dorothea, born March 25; spons. Barbara Schlerett. JBE

page 72

May 1 Catherine, daughter of Charles? Stroper? and Rosa Stagler; spons. Theodore Steigler and Theresa Kinsel. J O'Mealy

same day Joseph, son of John Basler and Regina Oberly; spons. Anton Heidelberger and Francisca Fetter. JOM

same day Barbara, daughter of Martin Bundle and Agatha Hess; spons. John Keller and Elizabeth Bearman. JOM

same day Teresa, daughter of Carl Bogenschütz and Juliana Eichman; spons. Leo Wenus? and Magdalene Ochsman?. JOM

[The above four records were written over in darker ink and it is nearly impossible to discern the original, thus the readings are very questionable.]

May 22 Francis, seven days old, son of Francis Segfried and Anna Maria Göll; spons. Rudolph and Anna Maria Siegfried. +J.B.Eps.Cin.

May 25 Catherine, born April 28, daughter of John and Mary Ann Mulvey; spons. Patrick Sherin and Julia Splain?. T. R. Butler

same day Elizabeth, born May 27, daughter of Joseph and Maria Anna Mathias; spons. Lucas Merkle and Catherine Mathias. TRB

same day John, son of Peter and Barbara Fehrenbach, born May 9; spons. Joseph Smith and Catherine Smith. TRB

June 8 Michael, born May 25, son of Jacob and Francisca Lilinger?; spons. Michael and Anna Maria Kirsch. TRB

page 73

same day Francis Xavier, son of Xavier and Mary Milliken?, born June 7; spons. Vincent Nadler and Sophronia Nadler. TRB

same day Joseph [remainder blank]. TRB

June 18 Elizabeth, born June 16, daughter of Edward Carville and Rosanna his wife; spons. Martin Beaumont [Bauman?] and Elizabeth Lint [Lind]. D. Senez

June 16 [blank, in hand of Senez]

June 22 Cunegunda, born this day, daughter of Philip Ethler and Cunegunda his wife; spons. Bassell Bogan and Genevieve Ent. DS

page 74

June 29 Jeremiah, born June 12, son of Denis and Mary Fogarthy; spons. Patrick Murphy and Bridget Fogarthy. TRB

same day Margaret, born August 1, 1842, daughter of Thomas and Ann or Nancy O'Donnell; spons. Eliza Smith and Ellen Lyons. TRB

same day David, born Feb. 2, 1845, son of Thomas and Ann O'Donnell; spons. Eliza Smith and Ellen Lyons. TRB

July 6 Andrew, born July 3, son of Andrew Helmutt and Elizabeth Effrein; spons. John Gab? and Catherine his wife. H. D. Juncker

same day conditionally, Amalia, 15 years old, daughter of Christian Kirsch and Louisa Kreschtmer; spons. Mary Bauman. HDJ

Aug. 10 Carl, son of Leo Wenis and Walburga, born August 8; spons. Erhard Bogenschütz. JBE

same day Carl, son of Sylvester Stiegler and Victoria, born Aug. 4; spons. Erhard Stroeber. JBE

same day a daughter of Henry McLowsky [McClusky?] and Helen, born August 7; spons. John Connely. JBE

page 75

same day Mary, daughter of August Büser and Maria, born July 13; spons. Philip Hartlaub. JBE

Aug. 17 Mary Kinsler, daughter of Joseph and Theresa Kinsler, born August 9; spons. Maria (Ströbel) Merkle. JBE

same day Thomas, son of Patrick Merck and Susan, born July 8; spons. Carl Cull and Rosanna his wife. JBE

August 24 Frederick Andrew, son of John Baptist Dietrich and Paulina, born Aug. 22; spons. Andrew Leister and Eva his wife. JBE

October 2 Catherine, born Sept. 10, daughter of Caspar Faller and Genevieve Streicher; spons. Martin Hess and Rosina Steinger?.

same day Joseph, born Aug. 30, son of Roman Gerber and Rosina (born Gerber); spons. Philip Hartlaub and Catherine Mathias.

same day Christian, born Sept. 7, son of Francis Anton Aid and Anna Maria Lint; spons. Landolin Hess and Marianna Lint. Josue M. Young

(To be continued)

---

Catholic Record Society - Diocese of Columbus  
197 E. Gay Street Columbus, Ohio 43215 Donald M. Schlegel, editor

---

