

## CHAPTER 6

# FOUNDING THE CHURCH IN OHIO

Hardly was the Dominican mission well started in Kentucky when letters to Bishop John Carroll from Ohio settlers led to a new missionary venture. It would be significant for the Order and the Catholic Church in the United States, and particularly for the first bishop of Ohio. The first letter on record was that of Jacob Dittoe who arrived in Ohio two years after it achieved statehood. In 1805 he wrote on behalf of a colony of thirty German Catholics around Lancaster, promising land for a church if the nation's first Catholic bishop could provide a priest for them.<sup>[1]</sup>

A second letter was sent to Baltimore by two men of the small Ohio capital of Chillicothe near the western end of the National Road. On February 1, 1807, they wrote,

We join our hands as one man in supplication to you desiring a priest, as there is no teacher of our Church in this part of the country; and if it is convenient for you to send us one we will do everything that is reasonable to support him. We have made no calculation of what might be collected yearly as we did not know whether we could be supplied or not; neither can we give a true account of the number of Catholics; but as nigh as we can come, is betwixt 30 and 40 which came from the Eastern Shore . . .<sup>[2]</sup>

In the summer of 1808 Bishop Carroll, having read this letter and endorsed it "Important," received Edward Fenwick on a visit from Kentucky. He probably expressed his concern for the Ohio Catholics. Before the end of the year Fenwick rode into the Ohio forests seeking the letter-writers and was led by the sound of an axe to the Dittoe home in a clearing. For Fenwick this journey to Ohio was the impetus to become an itinerant preacher, a role he would never abandon. His response marked the beginning of the Dominican mission in Ohio and the founding of the Church among the Catholics in that State.

With the welcome addition of five ordained friars in 1816, the provincial Samuel Wilson was able to free Edward Fenwick to return to the Dittoes and their fellow settlers beyond the Ohio River. He became totally itinerant there, traveling constantly in forest areas, finding settlers and inquiring about Catholic families among them. To a friend in London he described his lonely journeys in these words:

I have become, as they call me here, an itinerant preacher. It often happens that I am obliged to traverse vast and inhospitable forests where not even a trace of a road if to be seen. . . Many times, overtaken by night, I am obliged to hitch my horse to a tree and making my saddle a pillow I recommend myself to God and go to sleep with bears on all sides.<sup>[3]</sup>

In December 1817, a year after the ordination of Fenwick's nephew Nicholas Dominic Young, the youth was assigned by the provincial to join his uncle in the Ohio mission. Coming

from a visit to his family home at "Nonesuch" near Washington, D.C., he began his new life in the hamlet of Somerset in Perry County, welcomed by the Dittoes and their fellow settlers. He wrote home about his mission beginnings:

I presume you begin to expect a letter from me by this time. . . . We commenced house-keeping yesterday in a comfortable log house, tho' no ways furnished as yet with large trees almost every sort so that we have a good collection to choose out of to leave for shade, ornament for the yard. The situation is very handsome, being on a gradual eminence. At present the view is much contracted, but will be extensive when the place and country about is opened. I think that in the course of a few years we shall make it a very pleasant place. All we shall want will be money sufficient to enable us to erect good buildings. As for ourselves we can do very well with the present house as long as the family remains small. But the church is what I allude to. That is what we shall want in the very beginning. The one that is now finished and adjoining the house, besides being of rough logs, is entirely too small to contain the present congregation which is almost double in number to what it was when I past sic] this place in the Spring, and is daily increasing. The Greatest part of the new settlers are Germans from Connewago Congregation.[\[4\]](#) We shall perform divine services in the church for the first time next Sunday, and dedicate it to St. Joseph ... I must make a request of you. . . please send me the **National Intelligencer** one-year. I should be glad to have it ... to see the debates of Congress etc.[\[5\]](#)



**Fenwick among his people in the Ohio Forests**

Nicholas Dominic Young never lost his interest in the political life of the nation as he continued his zealous mission in Ohio.

#### St Joseph church, Somerset Ohio, 1818



The blessing of the little log church of St. Joseph, the first Catholic place of worship in Ohio, took place on December 6, 1818. A tiny log house adjoining the church served as a residence for the two friars. St. Joseph's was the center for the friars' visits to outlying missions and soon began to match in scope and influence the Kentucky establishment at St. Rose. The two sites became the dual mission centers of the American province.

In 1819 the settlers at Lancaster, Ohio rejoiced to complete still another log church, St. Mary's. The dedication of their new church occurred on Easter Sunday 1819. Spurred on by Michael Scott and other generous lay men and women, Christ Church, Cincinnati, had begun with a meeting held on Christmas Day in 1811, as announced in the town newspaper under the heading, CATHOLIC MEETING. It read:

As the Constitution of the United States allows liberty of conscience to all men, and the propagation of religious worship, it is earnestly requested by a number of the Roman Catholics of Cincinnati and its vicinity, that a meeting be held on the 25th of December, next, at the house of Jacob Fowbie, at 12 o'clock. . .when it is hoped all those in favor of establishing a congregation and giving encouragement will attend and give in their names, and at the same time appoint a committee of arrangements.<sup>[6]</sup>

Heeding the announcement were nine men, seven women and four children.<sup>[7]</sup> These determined Catholics, like others throughout the State, pursued their objective for seemingly endless years. In 1817 they were still meeting, hoping, and praying, and even using the press to call for help from Catholics in the East. Their notice read in part, "Considering ourselves like the lost sheep of Israel, forlorn and forsaken... without Guide, Church, or Pastor; we are compelled... to call upon our brethren throughout the Union for their assistance towards the erection of a Catholic Church."<sup>[8]</sup> Their efforts finally bore fruit in 1819 with the blessing of the first Catholic church in the city of Cincinnati. Only three years later they would become members of the cathedral parish of the same city.

Still, Edward Fenwick and Nicholas Young were the only priests stationed in Ohio. From Somerset, the two Dominicans rode out to scattered, rapidly growing settlements. Even the cities were experiencing great growth in the early 1820s. Many families traveled by stage or Conestoga wagon from the East, along the National Road, beckoned to the area by rumors of plentiful and cheap land.

Generally before 1821, Catholics were served in mission stations, that is, private homes or public buildings, used only occasionally for the liturgy. Some of these earliest missions, like

Somerset and Chillicothe, were set up by the initiative of local Catholics. In other areas Catholics were sought out by Fenwick who loved to say he was seeking "lost sheep" in the wilderness. There had been intermittent visits by missionaries before 1800 in the area that would later become Ohio. The Jesuits had accompanied explorers and as early as 1751 had built a chapel in the Sandusky area. Other missionaries attended Catholics as they traveled through the territory, but none remained long.[\[9\]](#)

The lot of the missionaries was very difficult. Travelling mostly by horseback, they were constantly exposed to extremes of heat and cold through forested areas. Having no fixed salaries, they survived through the trifling collections they received or because of the farm produce the faithful donated. In a period of seven months in 1826 alone, two of the Dominican missionaries calculated that they had traveled 2500 miles.[\[10\]](#)

Before becoming bishop, Fenwick had served Catholics in northern Ohio in Canton, Wooster, Dalton, Chippewa and Marshallville. Some other early sites where he or Young brought the sacraments included Canal Fulton where Masses were celebrated in the Matthew Patton home. At Danville and Walnut Creek, Fenwick officiated before 1820, as well as in nearby Mt. Vernon. A Youngstown cabin, owned by Daniel and Jane Sheehy, situated almost on the Ohio state border, was the site where Fenwick celebrated the Eucharist for the first time in that area. The tiny village of Dungannon in Columbiana County maintains a shrine to Fenwick who celebrated the first Mass there in 1817. The original McAllister Cabin has been maintained over the years and the wooden dresser that served as the altar of sacrifice still demonstrates to visitors the importance of that occasion to the people of Ohio. The log cabin itself is on the list of state historic buildings.

**Residence of Dominican friars, Somerset, Ohio**



**Historical marker at log house, Dungannon, Ohio**

The works of those early Dominican missionaries were greatly appreciated by Bishop Flaget of Bardstown, who had spiritual responsibility until 1821 for the entire Old Northwest, as well as for Kentucky. He himself visited Ohio, listened to the requests of the settlers, and marveled at the work of Edward Fenwick and his nephew. He it was who called for the creation of two new dioceses to be separated from Bardstown. One would serve Ohio, the other the Territory of Michigan, which extended north to the Canadian boundary and westward across Lake Michigan to the Mississippi River and beyond. The Dominican provincial Samuel Wilson agreed in principle with

Bishop Flaget's ideas for Ohio. However, he feared that Flaget would suggest adding another French bishop to those who were already governing four of the six American dioceses. He wrote his fears to the head of the Order in Rome, urging some action which would lead to a Dominican being named bishop in Ohio.[\[11\]](#)

Flaget meanwhile was testing his ideas with the five other American bishops, all far removed from the frontier. He first proposed for Ohio either of two Fenwicks: the Jesuit, Benedict, well qualified by his theological knowledge and preaching, or the Dominican Edward, a cousin of Benedict, who had knowledge of the country and was "very popular" there. The latter, he knew, could get help from the men of his Order.

To serve Michigan Territory Bishop Flaget suggested Demetrius Gallitzin, the royal Russian missionary in Pennsylvania; his second suggestion was the French Sulpician Jena-Jacques Lartigue. In the same letter Flaget had a second thought about Gallitzin: that he would be the right man for Ohio where German Catholics would receive him warmly. He even added a curious suggestion, namely that the Russian priest could make it easier for all involved by becoming a Dominican! The question of personal choice in response to an authentic vocation did not trouble the Sulpician bishop.[\[12\]](#) But lest that arrangement should entail insurmountable difficulties, Flaget wrote a second letter. This time he proposed again the Dominican Edward Fenwick for Ohio, since he was "a missionary full of zeal and humility." He mentioned the Dominican's lack of theological studies. Fenwick himself had always deplored the deficiency. In fact, Flaget admitted: "he has from all appearances ... as much [learning] as I. If I have been made a bishop I do not see why the same dignity could not be conferred upon him."[\[13\]](#) Archbishop Maréchal concurred.

Unaware that the focus was on him, Edward Fenwick had in the meantime been busy describing the Ohio missions to his English confrere, John Hill, then in Rome. In a letter written in 1820 Fenwick estimated there were probably 3,000 Catholics scattered widely over 700 or 800 miles. The people were principally German and Irish, and the two Dominican missionaries had urgent need of a priest who knew German. The greatest need was for "apostolic men who can carry the burden of heat and cold, weariness, thirst; and who will not find it too difficult to travel across mountains and through valleys to seek out stray sheep." Pleased that Hill would soon be coming to join the friars in the United States, Fenwick expressed his hope that the English friar would bring from Rome the true spirit of the Order and that the newcomer would be "the Instrument in the hands of God to communicate it to others; truly a difficult thing in this wild country, and it costs something to form Religious according to the spirit of our holy Founder."[\[14\]](#)

In 1821 the official document arrived from Rome naming Edward Fenwick as the first Bishop of Cincinnati. With strong protests, citing his unworthiness for the task, Fenwick finally accepted the nomination as Bishop of Ohio. He assumed that responsibility in 1822. His charge included Catholics in the entire state of Ohio, and over the vast Michigan Territory that comprised the present states of Michigan and Wisconsin.

### Jurisdiction of Bishop Fenwick, Cincinnati, Ohio, and missions of Michigan Territory



Bishop Fenwick wrote officials in Rome expressing his formal gratitude for the favor bestowed on him. He realized that this position in the Church meant much to his Dominican brethren. Then he gave a panoramic view of his responsibilities as he saw them. Unlike some previously named bishops, he knew well the people and the territory now under his care. He described the length of Ohio as 240 miles and its width as 281 miles; an area in which he counted 6000 Catholics among its widespread population. He told of building the church at Somerset and "others in different parts of the province."<sup>[15]</sup> His people, mostly German, Irish and Swiss, were industrious and desirous of religious instruction. He recommended that a separate diocese

be set up for Michigan Territory. To strengthen his suggestion, he described the extensive territory that embraced three Great Lakes, Huron, Superior and Michigan. He described the inhabitants as migrant fur traders, and thousands of Indians converted years before by the Jesuits. Both groups were without resident priests to serve them.

The new bishop did not wait long to begin the journey from Kentucky to Cincinnati, the Queen City of the West. Samuel Wilson, John Augustine Hill, and two young friars, John de Raymaecker and John Hynes, whom he had recently ordained, accompanied him. After a wet, cold journey, the bishop's party reached the Queen City on March 23 and there found temporary shelter. They were scarcely settled in the see city when they heard rumors of trouble in Kentucky. Bishop Flaget had expressed the fear that Wilson's presence in Ohio meant that all the Dominican friars would now be called to the Cincinnati diocese. Accordingly, he appealed to the office of Propaganda Fide to forbid such a move. The Roman officials obliged Flaget by sending Wilson a stern warning. He was told emphatically that he could not transfer his friars to another diocese without the consent of the local bishop.<sup>[16]</sup> After only four short months in Ohio, Wilson returned to Kentucky. His departure greatly concerned Fenwick, who had been fortunate to have the learned theologian whose wise counsel he valued. Now he did not have the support of a capable vicar. This would prove especially frustrating when he was required to be away from his diocese. But the bishop quickly immersed himself in the duties of his office and in learning about the affairs of his see city.

Established in 1788, Cincinnati had grown rapidly from a small frontier settlement to a prosperous river city. Now it surpassed in importance every other city in Ohio. Its position on the Ohio River attracted diverse economic interests, including trade, navigation and manufacturing. After the War of 1812, many New Englanders sought fortunes there; by 1830 Europeans, principally German and Irish, migrated in great numbers in search of employment. By 1830 the city had grown to 25,000. Rapid growth contributed to social crises. The first years of the nineteenth century were seriously charged with anti-Catholic bias. Cincinnati's immigrant population, already suspect to "nativists," could not expect to escape the prevailing bigotry.

Despite the apparent prosperity of Cincinnati, it was clear to the bishop that Catholics in the city and other areas in the state did not have sufficient income to support the pioneer church. They had little money to put into the collection basket on Sundays. At the frame cathedral, the donations on a Sunday amounted to two or three dollars. "With this modest sum," Fenwick wrote to the head of the Order, "I am forced to manage a household of 7 persons with 2 horses. Now I seek from your . . . Paternity how it is possible for me from such a small resource to provide not only for my own metropolis but for the entire region of Ohio."[\[17\]](#) He said he found joy in propagating the Order in America, but was not prepared for the difficulties entailed. In the same poignant letter he pleaded for priests and material aid. He told his superior he had hoped for greater support from the friars in Kentucky where he had given so much. He concluded by begging for attention to his needs.

To present his case to Roman officials, Fenwick borrowed money for the journey and left Cincinnati for Europe on May 30, 1823. He landed at Bordeaux on August 5 and continued on to Rome. Because of the death of the reigning pope, he had time to finalize his plans. On October 5, the new Pope Leo XII assumed office. When Fenwick met the pontiff the following day, he begged him to accept his resignation for reasons of incapacity and unworthiness. Leo would not grant this request but was touched upon hearing of Fenwick's poverty and his need for personnel. He gave Fenwick \$1200 and many ecclesiastical articles needed in the new diocese.[\[18\]](#) The bishop referred to other offices in Rome his additional requests, such as the creation of two provinces in order to divide monetary resources, establishment of a diocese for Detroit, and assignment of a theologian for Ohio.

As Fenwick waited for a response to his requests, he lost no time in appealing for financial assistance from the Italian people. He described his diocese, the number of inhabitants, and its poverty. He told them of his welcome among Catholics who had not seen a priest for five or ten years, of his plans for building up a Church that included Indians and European immigrants as well as native-born Americans.[\[19\]](#) The bishop repeated this appeal in France, in Belgium, and in England. He varied the plea depending upon his audience, often telling about his parishioners' crude log cabin homes, their simplicity of lifestyle, and their eagerness to hear the word of God. He liked to explain that even those of other faiths came to hear the word of God when they learned that a missionary had come into their area.[\[20\]](#)

Financial assistance came Fenwick's way after these rousing talks. But he still needed personnel to carry out his dreams of spreading the Gospel. In Rome a German diocesan priest, Frederic Rese, offered his service for the German immigrants in Ohio. Encouraged by Rese's generosity, Fenwick left Rome for France hoping for more volunteers there. He was not disappointed. For ministry to the Indians and French-speaking fur traders in Michigan Territory the bishop obtained two French diocesan priests, Jean Bellamy and Pierre Déjean. For his continuing dream of having women religious to educate the young, Fenwick secured Sister Mary St. Paul, a French Sister of Mercy. All of the new volunteers departed for the United States, leaving Fenwick to continue his begging tour. Two experiences highlighted the bishop's travel in France. In Paris, Stephen Badin, the American missionary who had spent the previous five years in France, embraced Fenwick and introduced him to many Parisian Catholic authorities. The bishop quickly made his appeal to this sympathetic audience.

The second outstanding experience occurred when Fenwick reached Lyon. There he laid his financial problems before the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, a lay organization for raising and distributing monies to aid missionaries abroad. Fenwick's affability and modest demeanor favorably impressed the grand almoner, who awarded him eight thousand francs (equivalent to about 8000 dollars). In fact he promised to send Fenwick an annual donation.[\[21\]](#)

Fenwick ended his stay in Europe with a stop in England. There he made another appeal for funds. More important, he greeted many of his friends of the Order and assured the English friars that he sought no compensation for the years that Wilson and the other co-founders of the American Dominicans had labored for the English province. This compensation had been an earlier source of contention between John Hill and the provincial Pius Potier. With assurances of friendship Fenwick sailed from Liverpool toward the end of October 1824.

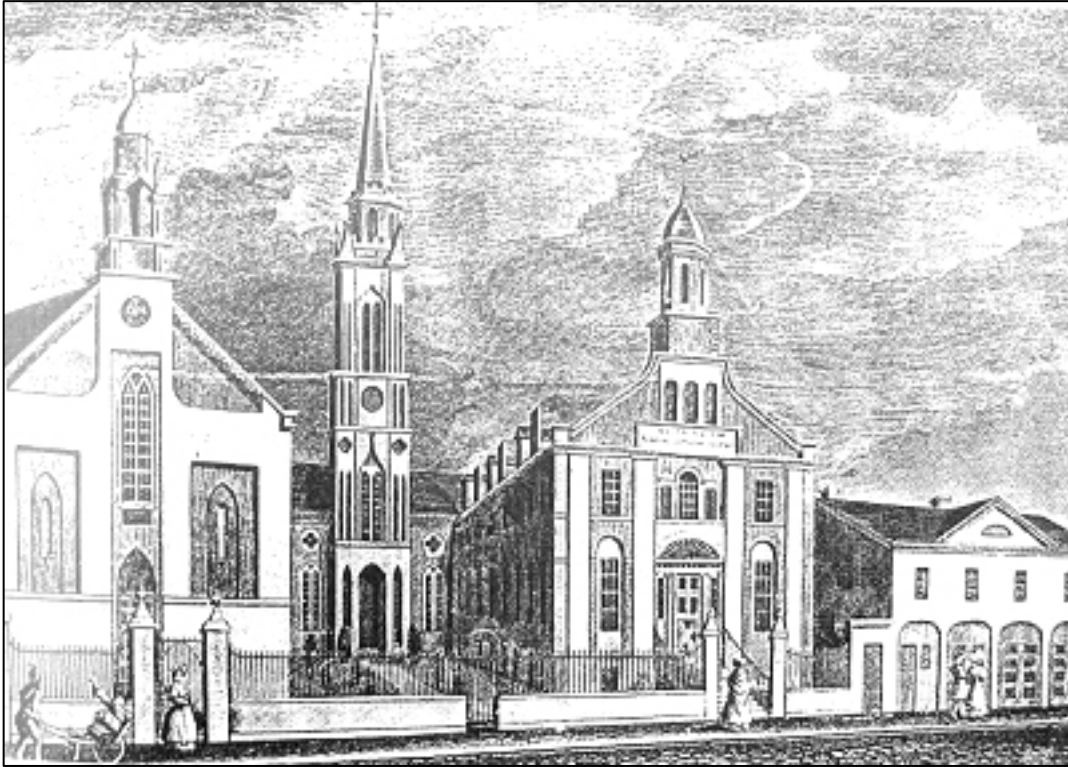
On the sea voyage home Fenwick had time to reflect. He counted as disappointments the fact that the Pope had refused to accept his resignation, that he had not obtained a theologian for Ohio, and that there was no new Detroit diocese to diminish his huge responsibility. He had mixed feelings about the feasibility of forming two separate provinces. He surely was happy about the amount of money safely deposited with Wright & Company of London and especially about the coming of Sister St. Paul and the three priests. It was well that Fenwick did not know of the changes that had occurred since his departure seventeen months earlier.

Fenwick reached the United States on December 1, 1824. While in the East he visited relatives, gave his fellow clergymen the latest news from abroad, and assisted wherever he could. When winter had passed he arranged transportation for his return to Cincinnati. Nicholas Dominic Young, Fenwick's nephew, asked John Dugan of Zanesville, a businessman and good friend of Fenwick, to drive his coach from Baltimore to Ohio. Gabriel Richard, missionary and Congressman from Michigan, joined the group for the journey westward. Near Cumberland, Maryland, on March 11, the horses bolted and ran away. Everyone was thrown from the coach and the baggage scattered. The only person seriously injured, however, was the driver, John Dugan. Only a few hours later, he died in Fenwick's arms.

Several weeks later, Fenwick finally reached Cincinnati. Many surprises awaited him. Without Samuel Wilson he had no one to supply a clear picture of the state of the diocese. Hill, head of the newly created province of St. Louis Bertrand in Ohio, was too busy at Somerset to be of service to him in Cincinnati. However, the bishop did enjoy visiting the little school recently organized by Sister Mary St. Paul. He expressed his pleasure with the good work of the other new recruit, Frederic Rese, who "learns English very fast and is working miracles with his Germans. He has already unearthed thirty-three Catholic families and has almost ruined the Lutheran Church, the pastor of which is spitting fire and flames against him. He preaches in German every Sunday and will soon begin in English."[\[22\]](#)



### St. Peter's Cathedral, residence and Athenaeum, Cincinnati, 1830

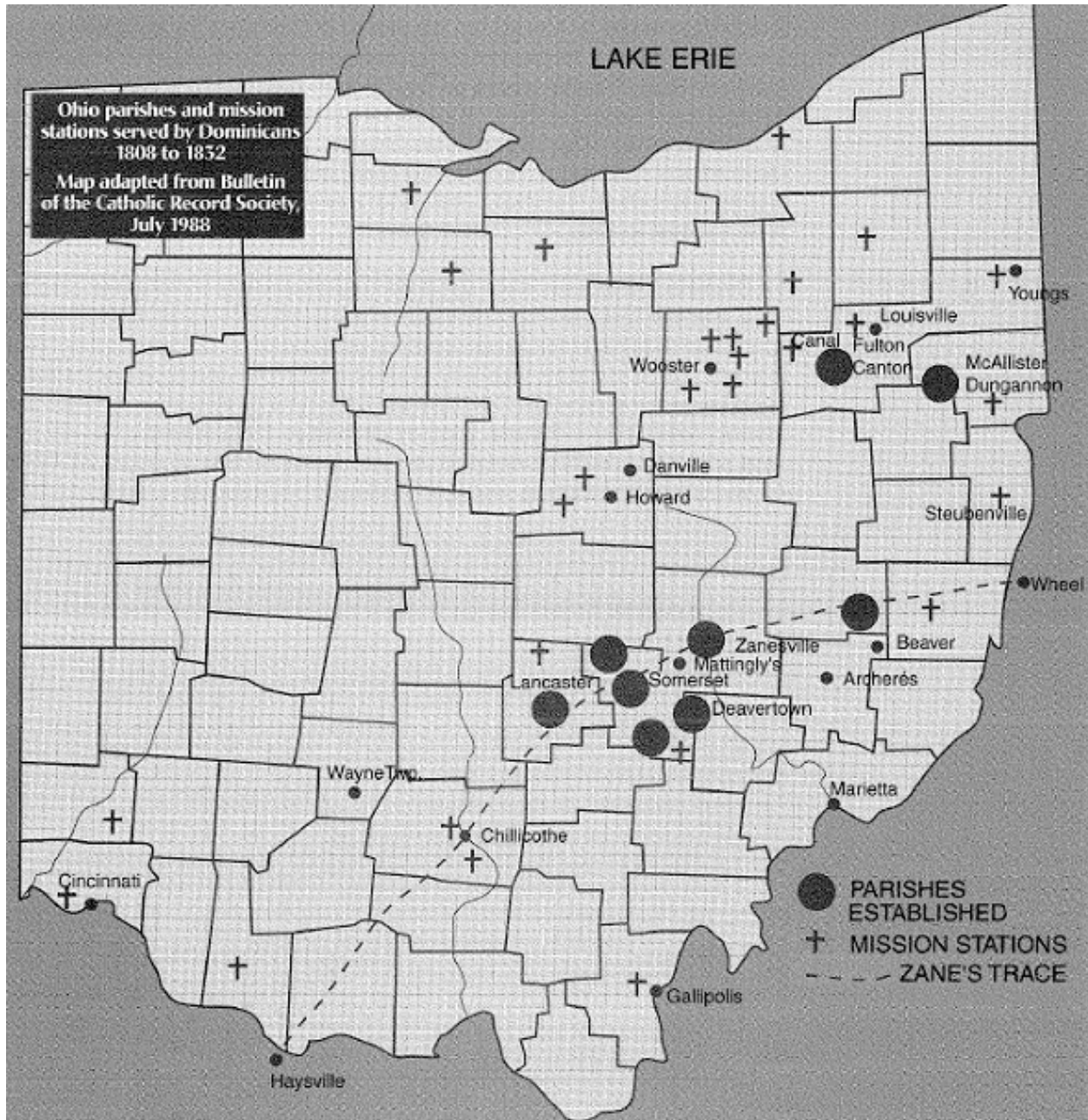


Fenwick found one surprise distressing. In the bishop's absence, Hill had arranged for the building of a three-story brick house as an episcopal residence. This pretentious structure stood in great contrast to the humble little frame church that served as the cathedral. Hill left the bishop with a debt of \$4000 for the episcopal residence.<sup>[23]</sup> The contrast between his imposing house and the little frame church did not last long. Fenwick made plans to build a fitting cathedral immediately. He secured the land, hired an architect and by August of 1825, the walls of the building were nearly finished. Work progressed so rapidly that on June 29, the first Mass was celebrated in the yet unfinished structure. The new cathedral, named St. Peter's, measured 100 feet by 50 feet, a large church for this area of the country. Cincinnati residents delighted in this elegant yet simply appointed place of worship.<sup>[24]</sup>

With the completion of the cathedral, Fenwick devoted more time to securing priests to preach the Gospel and placing the ones already in his diocese. In Michigan Territory he could rely on Gabriel Richard, a Sulpician sent to the Detroit area by Bishop Carroll in 1798. Now the bishop sent two more missionaries, Anthony Ganilh and Vincent Badin, the younger brother of the veteran Kentucky missionary, Stephen Badin. Vincent was the first man ordained to the priesthood by Fenwick in Ohio, at the end of March 1822. Just two years later Pierre Déjean and Jean Bellamy arrived from France to lighten the clerical burdens in Michigan. These men served wherever Gabriel Richard sent them until Fenwick could become better acquainted with the needs of the area.

The number of priests in Ohio and Michigan Territory fluctuated from year to year. There were defections, requests to return to Europe or serve in other dioceses, and deaths of young and

old. Through the 1820s, Fenwick and his fellow Dominicans established many parishes and helped parishioners build their churches. By mid-decade they were ably assisted by diocesan clergy. Two parishes still bear witness to the friars' attempt to give permanence to local congregations. They are St. Thomas in Zanesville and St. John in Canton.



The historic city of Zanesville took its name from Zane's Trace, the first road through Ohio. Ebenezer Zane, with the help of relatives, blazed the trail from Wheeling to Maysville, Kentucky, and started settlements along the trace. The city of Zanesville, named for him, was settled in 1799. There the friars ministered to Catholic settlers and encouraged the erection of a new stone and brick church in March 1823, on land donated by John Dugan. Stephen Hyacinth

Montgomery, who served as first resident pastor, solicited funds far and wide, and even abroad, to pay for the new church. Dominican priests still serve St. Thomas Church in that city.

St. John Parish in Canton, where Edward Fenwick celebrated Mass in 1817, was an important mission station of the Dominican friars of Somerset. One of the earliest settlers in the city in 1806, John Shorb, offered his home for the celebration of the Eucharist until the new brick church was built in 1824. He donated five acres of land suitably located for the structure, but did not live to see the work completed. During construction, in July of 1824, Shorb suffered a fatal blow from a falling beam. Bishop Fenwick himself dedicated the new church and offered the first Mass in it. John Augustine Hill, much beloved as the first resident pastor of St. John's, used this parish as his missionary staging ground, riding many miles in order to preach the Word. Hill attended to the spiritual needs of the parishioners of St. John's until his death in 1828.

Somerset's close proximity to Zane's Trace and the National Road accounted for its rapid growth. By 1828, its first log church had reached its capacity. Nicholas Young, founding pastor, and his uncle Edward knew a larger structure was needed. This second church with a steeple visible for miles around opened in 1829, with N.D. Young officiating.

The friar Thomas Martin also devoted many hours on horseback to bring the Gospel to Catholics in northern Ohio. After the historic ground breaking for the Ohio Canal in Cleveland in 1826, Martin tended to the spiritual needs of the Irish laborers brought to the Cleveland-Akron area for that project. Daniel O'Leary, a young Dominican brought to America by Hill, served in Ohio after his ordination and profession. At Somerset he became an inspiration to his brothers. One wrote that in March of 1830, "at nine o'clock on a pitch-black night, while a torrential rain was falling, a man knocked at the door, asking for a priest to carry the viaticum to a gravely ill person ninety miles distant. Father O'Leary, . . . not in the least disconcerted by the storm and darkness, . . . mounted his horse, and set out cheerfully." [\[25\]](#) The witness, Samuel Mazzuchelli, the young Dominican missionary, stated that such happenings were common in Ohio.

Diocesan priests soon made significant contributions to building the Church in Ohio. Frederic Rese, the first of the diocesan priests whom Fenwick relied upon, came specifically to minister to German-speaking parishioners of the cathedral and nearby missions. But he did more than that; he cared deeply for Fenwick and in the bishop's declining years reminded him of duties and obligations he was prone to forget. James Mullon, ordained as a diocesan priest by Fenwick in 1825, proved to be one of the most successful preachers, especially in Ohio. It was he who accompanied Fenwick on his visit to the Indians in Michigan Territory in 1829 and left a written account.

66	THE UNITED STATES	1834.	1834.	CATHOLIC ALMANAC.	67
DIOCESS OF DETROIT.					
MICHIGAN AND NORTH-WEST TERRITORIES.					
<p><i>Detroit</i>, Cathedral of St. Ann. Right Rev. Frederick Réze, D. D.; Rev. Vin. Badin; Rev. Martin Kundig; Rev. Mr. Bonduel. High Mass at 9 o'clock for the Germans, and at 11 for the French. Sermons in German, French and English.</p>			<p><i>Norwalk</i>, Huron co., 1st Sunday, Mass at 10, Rev. Edmund Quin. Dw. at Tiffin.</p>		
<p><i>Monroe</i>. High Mass at 10. Rev. Mr. Carabin.</p>			<p><i>Rehoboth</i>, Perry co., St. Lewis Bertrand, attended from St. Joseph's, Somerset.</p>		
<p><i>St. Joseph's</i>: High Mass at 10. Rev. S. T. Badin; Rev. Mr. Deseille. Instruction in Indian and French.</p>			<p><i>St. Barnabas</i>, Morgan co., 2d Sunday, do.</p>		
<p><i>St. Paul</i>, } <i>St. Felicite</i>, } visited alternately. Rev. Mr. Boheme. <i>St. Francis</i>, }</p>			<p><i>St. Dominick</i>, near Barnsville, Guernsey co., 1st Sunday, Rev. R. P. Miles.</p>		
<p><i>St. Felicite</i>, St. Claire's River. Rev. Mr. Visyoky.</p>			<p><i>St. Luke's</i>, near Danville, Knox co., 2d Sunday of 2d month, served from St. Joseph's.</p>		
<p><i>Island of Michilimachinac</i>. Rev. Mr. Lostric. Instructions in English and French.</p>			<p><i>St. Martin's</i>, near Cedarville, Brown co., Rev. J. Reid-Somerset, Perry co., St. Joseph's, Rev. Nicholas D. Young, Rev. Joseph O'Leary, Rev. James Bullock, Rev. Charles D. Boling.</p>		
<p><i>Arbre Croche</i>. Rev. Simon Lauderle. Cong. St. Liguori.</p>			<p>Here is the Convent of the Dominicans, with a neat church attached to it. The congregation is said to be the largest in Ohio. This may be called the Mother Church of the Diocese of Cincinnati, as it is the first that was established in this state. The Right Rev. Dr. Fenwick, with the Rev. N. D. Young, settled here in 1818, and were the first Catholic clergymen stationed in Ohio.</p>		
<p><i>Grand River</i>. Rev. Mr. Boraga. Instructions in Indian.</p>			<p><i>Somerset</i>, Perry co., Trinity church, Mass at 10, Rev. Nicholas D. Young.</p>		
<p><i>Ann Harbour</i>. Rev. Mr. Kelly.</p>			<p><i>Staubenville</i>, Jefferson co., Mass at 11, Rev. John H. Al Grady.</p>		
<p><i>Vinebago</i>. Rev. S. Mazzuchelli. Instructions in the Vinebago language.</p>			<p><i>Tiffin</i>, Seneca co., Rev. Edmund Quin.</p>		
<p><i>Green Bay</i>. High Mass at 10. Rev. Mr. Hotsches. Sermons in French and Menomony.</p>			<p><i>Zanesville</i>, St. John (Evangelist), Rev. Chas. P. Montgomery.</p>		
DIOCESS OF CINCINNATI. OHIO.			DIOCESS OF BARDSTOWN. KENTUCKY.		
<p><i>Cincinnati</i>, Cathedral of St. Peter, Rt. Rev. John B. Purcell, D. D.; Rev. James J. Mullon, Rev. James V. Wiseman, Rev. Edward T. Collins, Rev. Xaverius Tchenhess.</p>			<p><i>Bardstown</i>---Cathedral of St. Joseph, Right Rev. Ben. J. Flaget, D. D.; Right Rev. John B. David, D. D. Coadj.; Rev. Ignatius A. Reynolds; Rev. ——— Petit, and other gentlemen from the Seminary.</p>		
<p><i>Canton</i>, Stark co., St. John Baptist, Mass at 10, Rev. Martin Henni.</p>			<p><i>Breckinridge county</i>, Rev. ——— Rogers</p>		
<p><i>Hamilton</i>, Butler co., Church not yet dedicated.</p>			<p><i>Bullet county</i>, Rev. J. Elliott</p>		
<p><i>Lancaster</i>, Fairfield co., Mass at 10, every 3d Sunday, Rev. N. D. Young. Dw. at St. Joseph's, Somerset.</p>			<p><i>Casey county</i>, Rev. David Deparg</p>		
<p><i>New Lisbon</i>, Columbiana co., St. Paul's, 2d Sunday, Rev. John H. Magrady. Dw. at Steubenville.</p>					

Parishes in the Cincinnati diocese and the new diocese of Detroit (1833).  
Parishes then served by Dominicans are underlined.

John de Raymaecker ministered to the Germans in Canton, and later assisted Young and Martin. He made a considerable contribution to the preaching mission when Fenwick sent him to Europe in 1827, to secure more priests for the Ohio diocese. He returned bringing three diocesan seminarians who were a credit to the Church: John Martin Henni, Martin Kundig, and John Baptist Cliteur.

In 1829, Fenwick ordained the three seminarians brought by Raymaecker as diocesan clergy. Henni's first assignment was to be resident pastor at Canton. He carried on the Dominican practice of reaching out to many settlements in northern Ohio. Martin Kundig served first as teacher at the seminary in Cincinnati, then as travelling missionary to the German-speaking Catholics in southern Ohio.

John B. Cliteur became Fenwick's secretary after ordination. In that capacity he informed the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in France about the Ohio church. In one longer report, he wrote of many converts attracted by the kindness of Ohio priests; of the diocesan seminary that would open in a few months; and of the coming of socialist Robert Owen. Cliteur

attended a lecture by this controversial figure, describing him as "somber and neglected" in appearance, whose face "carried visible marks of trouble and combat."[\[26\]](#) In commenting on Owen's failure at New Harmony, Indiana, Clicteur said, "the spirit of the people in this country is not disposed to a system of unbelief." This young priest's days of service were abruptly ended by death seven months after ordination. Hill's death in 1828, Clicteur's in 1829, and that of Munos in 1830 must have been a severe blow to Fenwick's hopes for a sufficient supply of laborers in his vineyard.

Two unusual priests who ministered under Bishop Fenwick in Michigan Territory deserve mention. They served the native tribes in the territory north of Ohio. Samuel Mazzuchelli, O.P., and Frederic Baraga arrived late in Fenwick's tenure as bishop, but after the bishop's death rendered valuable service for many years. Both became aware of Fenwick's needs during Rese's visit to Europe in 1827. The story of Mazzuchelli and his ministry is told in chapter 7. Even before Mazzuchelli left for his mission territory, Frederic Baraga was writing from Austria that he wished to transfer to the Cincinnati Diocese. He had become aware of Fenwick's need from a little booklet in German, edited by Fredric Rese "in which I read with tears how few workers there are in your diocese, while the harvest is most abundant."[\[27\]](#) He noted that he had the necessary permissions from his bishop and from Austrian Emperor Augustus. He needed only Fenwick's acceptance.[\[28\]](#) There was no hesitation on Fenwick's part. In his mind Baraga was already placed in Michigan, since the departure of Father Bellamy for China and the return of Pierre Déjean to France. Baraga arrived in Cincinnati in January 1831 where he joined the Bishop's household. There he studied both English and the Ottawa language while waiting for the journey north in the summer of that year. Fenwick was delighted to have Baraga as his travelling companion to the Ottawa Nation where he replaced Déjean at Arbre Croche.

To Fenwick, the last and perhaps the greatest surprise candidate who volunteered to serve in the rugged Michigan Territory was his old friend, Stephen Badin. Now almost seventy years old, Badin had returned from France in 1828, and offered his services for the Indian missions. Fenwick's wise suggestion that he serve at Mission St. Joseph with the Pottawatamies proved to be pleasing to Badin as well as to Pokagan, their chief. Badin gave himself tirelessly as he had always done, setting up a school for children, and writing frankly of all the needs of his mission.

Later several clergymen who had served under Fenwick distinguished themselves as bishops in various American dioceses: John Henni in Milwaukee, Richard Miles in Nashville and Frederick Baraga in Marquette.

Bishop Fenwick's plans for the American Dominican missions always included women religious working in collaboration with the friars. He rejoiced at the establishment of the Kentucky Sisters and wanted a similar group in Ohio. He was not alone in his wish to have Dominican sisters in the state. In 1825, John Hill wrote to Nicholas Young suggesting that he persuade Miles to bring the sisters to Ohio, adding that "Somerset would be better for them and for us" and listing the advantages for such a move.[\[29\]](#)

Fenwick's first effort to have the service of women religious was disappointing. He held great hope for the school that Sister Mary St. Paul established in Cincinnati. Shortly after her arrival in 1824, she had opened a school for girls with the help of Eliza Rose Powell, a convert in

Kentucky. So pleased was Fenwick with the school when he returned from Europe in 1825, that he wrote the Mother Superior in France asking for more members of her congregation.[30] The disappointment that no more sisters arrived was compounded by the death of Mary St. Paul in September of 1827. Of necessity the school was closed.

The second venture was of even shorter duration. Both Fenwick and Stephen Badin had invited the Collettine Poor Clare nuns in Bruges to come to Cincinnati. Two of them, Françoise Vindevoghel and Victoire de Selles arrived in 1826. The third arrival was a Beguine from Ghent, Adeline Malingie. They joined Sister St. Paul in her school in 1827 and taught seventy pupils. When Adeline decided to leave the group the school was closed. The Poor Clares accepted an invitation to Pittsburgh, rejecting Fenwick's request that they go to Canton.[31] Thus they stayed in Ohio only fourteen months.

Fenwick was not satisfied with only one school. In 1825 he asked for women of Mother Seton's Sisters of Charity. John Dubois, the priest who acted as guide for the sisters, refused unless Fenwick could guarantee their financial security.[32] This the Bishop could not do. Undaunted, he waited for better times. In 1829 Fenwick wrote to the superior of the Charity Sisters, inviting them to open "a female orphan asylum under your zealous & charitable care. . . ." [33] He assured them of a "good & comfortable house" rent free, and \$200 in cash annually for their support. They accepted this generous offer. Escorted by James Mullon, four sisters arrived in Cincinnati in October: Francis Xavier Jordan, Victoria Fitzgerald, Beatrice Tyler, and Albina Levy.[34] The Sisters of Charity continue to give generous service, not only in Cincinnati, but also in many parts of the country today.

Fenwick still had dreams of Dominican Sisters sharing his ministry in Ohio. His hopes finally became reality early in 1830. On January 11, four sisters from St. Magdalene, Kentucky, escorted by Stephen H. Montgomery, left for Ohio. The women who opened this first Dominican convent in Somerset were Benven Sansbury, Emily Elder, Agnes Harbin and Catherine Mudd. To break the long journey, the sisters rested a week in Cincinnati where they met and conferred with Fenwick. **The U.S. Catholic Miscellany** for February 20, 1830, noted that "Four sisters of the order of St. Dominic called from their monastery in Kentucky . . . passed through Cincinnati on their way to Somerset, Perry Co., Ohio." They planned to establish a female school there; they were "qualified, devoted to the cause of moral and religious instruction," and much good was anticipated from their presence.

The sisters arrived in Somerset on February 5 and named their establishment St. Mary's. Emily Elder became their first superior, and Benven Sansbury, the procurator. The story of their coming to Ohio is best told by Benven herself in her valuable journal written in pencil on brown paper, appropriately called the "brown paper annals." She wrote

The Sisters of St. Mary's Community at Somerset in 1830, having been invited by Bishop Fenwick . . . some times previous to their departure . . . had a rugged journey to Louisville. Staid [sic] there a few days in company with Father Montgomery [Stephen] who was their pilot to their destination. Staid [sic] a week with Bishop Fenwick under whose auspices the foundation of St. Mary's was made. When the Sisters arrived at Somerset the place where they were to stop, the house that had been purchased for them

was not vacated. . they had to find hospitality with H. & Peter Dittoe's for three weeks. .  
 .the Dominican Sisters created quite a sensational stir among the citizens.

St Mary's, Somerset, 1834 [page from the Catholic Almanac]

120	THE UNITED STATES	1834.	1834.	CATHOLIC ALMANAC.	121
<p><b>ST. MARY'S SEMINARY, <i>Somerset, Ohio.</i></b>                      This Seminary was commenced about three years ago, and has been as liberally patronized as its friends could have expected.                      The institution is under the immediate inspection of the Rev. N. D. Young, who occasionally examines the pupils and encourages their progress. To reward merit and excite emulation, medals are monthly distributed. On the last of July a general Examination is held, and the month of August annually observed as vacation.                      The ladies who govern this Seminary have consecrated themselves to the service of God and the instruction of female youth. Among them is a French lady, well qualified to teach the French language. By a conscientious care of their pupils and strict attention to their advancement, by inculcating neatness, good manners, politeness, and moral principles, they hope to merit public patronage. The religion professed by these is the Catholic; parents, however, need not apprehend, that any solicitations will be used to induce</p>			<p>children of a different persuasion to embrace the Catholic. Pupils of all denominations are received, from the age of 6 to 16. They will be required to submit only to the general regulations of the Seminary, viz. to attend morning and evening prayer and Divine service on Sundays and Holidays: this being a necessary regulation for the observance of discipline.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">THE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION</p> <p>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.—Particular attention is paid in teaching Orthography, Reading, Writing, and the Grammar of both languages.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Terms for Day Scholars.</i></p> <p>Orthography, Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic, \$8 per annum—\$2 per quarter.</p>		

The residents of Somerset had never seen a religious Sister. Benven recorded that their first house was a small brick structure on an acre of ground that also included a carpenter's shop. Shortly after settling in, the sisters opened their "female academy." When the bishop found there was demand for a boarding school, she reported that he "gave them the money to build a house & was doing his very best in every way. . . .to raise up the school, gave a piano, celestial and Terrestrial globes, a valuable relic case with 30 & more relics . . . . some oil paintings and very many things."

The sisters' convent was in Holy Trinity parish, Somerset, a foundation still staffed by the Dominican friars. Father Nicholas Young and local parishioners assisted them in building a new convent in the fall of 1830. "The first building," Benven wrote, "was a two story-brick, 40 by 35 feet, with good basement and useful attic." Members of the parish made the brick, put up the building and did the carpenter work. She noted that "Brick could be got \$3 per thousand — carpenters worked for a dollar per day — all kinds of provisions could be bought for a mere trifle. Chickens, eggs, butter in great or small quantities for 2 & 3 cts per [unit] — Beef & Pork 2 — Wheat [sic] 37 — Corn 25 cts. Oates [sic] 15c" [\[35\]](#)

The number of sisters at St. Mary's increased with the arrival of Sisters from Kentucky and prospective candidates. In 1831 Helen Whelan and Columba Walsh came from Kentucky. In the same year came Ursula Grignon, a parishioner of Samuel Mazzuchelli's mission in Green Bay, Wisconsin, who as a novice took the name of Sister Mary. She was the daughter of a French-Canadian father and a Chippewa mother. Fluent in French and the Chippewa language, Sister Mary planned to return to Green Bay later to teach her tribal people.

Bishop Fenwick himself escorted Ursula to Somerset in 1831 when he returned from one of his visits to various Indian tribes living near Lake Michigan. About a month after her arrival in Ohio, Ursula wrote to her parents about her new life. There were six sisters at her convent and a superior "whom we call Mother, who is very amiable." Ursula wanted them to know something of her daily routine:

I am now going to tell you the state of affairs. In the morning at 3:30 the bell rings and we must get up without fail. It rings again for community prayer and a half hour of meditation; at six we go to work, at seven the rosary, after breakfast we recite our lessons, at 8 to work. There is not a minute lost. . . . I am going to tell you all I study: geography, grammar, etymology of words, correct the incorrect syntax, American history and arithmetic. Now for the [crafts]: sewing work on marquise lace, make flowers, knit, learn notes (music). That is what I am studying at present.

She concluded her letter, "May God keep you all, my dear and darling family." [36]

When her novitiate ended Ursula taught French in the Sisters' Academy which by 1832 numbered 60 young women. Another candidate, Jane Lynch from nearby Zanesville, joined St. Mary's community in 1832. She received the religious name Rose and later served the community as Mother Rose for many years. The record of receptions notes that she received the habit on April 30, 1832, and that "her novice-ship began May 5, 1832." She was the first of six Lynchs to enter the Dominican Order, including Monica, the mother of the family, and a brother who joined the friars.

An observer's account of the reception of Ursula Grignon as a Dominican novice at Somerset in 1832

OHIO.

RECEPTION OF A NUN.

From the *U. S. Catholic Press*.

*Mr. Editor*—On the 13th of Feb. being in Somerset, Ohio, I was much gratified in witnessing the edifying ceremony of the reception of a young lady to the religious habit of the order of St. Dominic, in the catholic church of that pretty little village. Being by casualty a spectator, and seeing the admonition of our divine Lord or rather his evangelical counsel to renounce "all things," even "father and mother," for his sake, practically observed by this female. I thought as one of your subscribers, who take great pleasure in reading such information in your and other catholic publications, that a short account of this ceremony, the first I have ever had the pleasure to witness, would not be uninteresting to the generality to your readers.

The establishment situated in the precincts of Somerset, was commenced two years ago. The ladies, six in number, were procured from a similar house in Kentucky by the Right Rev. Dr. Fenwick, who, I believe, is of the order of St. Dominic, and its superior general in this country. They commenced in a small house purchased for them with one acre of ground attached, by the same zealous prelate. The house soon proving too confined for the discharge of their religious duties, the end of their institute, and the instruction of youth, they were compelled to build one more suitable last year. This house which I had the pleasure of examining, (as all strangers have that liberty,) is very commodiously arranged, not in, I am persuaded even already too circumscribed to answer their purposes. The young female, the subject of this communication, as I am informed, is a French lady, who came here sometime last year for the object of dedicating herself in the life she has now so solemnly embraced; at

least, I understood from the preacher on the occasion, who on one year's trial or novitiate as he called it, she will solemnly ratify by vow, what she has begun, should she persevere in her desire, and the other sisters who have already made their vows, elect her to be a future member of their community. Every thing of importance, I am told, is decided among these sisters by the ballot box, and one of the Rev. gentlemen of the Dominican order observed to me in my examination of the establishment, that this was a peculiar feature in their constitutions, and made the order like a little republic. "The principles," said he, "by which it is governed vary but little from our republican system." But to return to the ceremony—I was told that the young lady had a good French education; she will of course prove a great acquisition to the establishment, as a French teacher in the seminary. The ceremony of reception was indeed very impressive. Not long after I had taken my seat in the church, a procession of young ladies forming two rows came from the convent; these I presume were the pupils of the seminary; after them followed the candidate for the veil, dressed in the finest style, decorated with flowers and other ornaments used by the *beau monde*; on her side were two of the largest girls, she bearing a cross in her hand, emblematic I suppose of her intended change, from the worldly to the religious life. After them followed six nuns, dressed in the humble habiliments of their order, of white domestic flannel, a striking emblem of the purity, we may suppose, that adorns their hearts. The procession advanced into the church with slow pace as far as the railing of the sanctuary, when the girls turned to the right and left, leaving the candidate in the middle making her prostration. The sisters were directed by the officiating clergyman to take their seats on the gospel side of the sanctuary.



## Professions in the Convent of St. Ann's

I hereby make it fully appear to my satisfaction, that I made my profession in the above mentioned Convent according to the rules and Constitutions of the Order of St. Dominick, being legally constituted and authorized to receive my profession Sister Benvenuta Sansbury, Superior of the said Convent, Sister Helen Whelan, Mother of Novices, & Fray Rev. St. Dominick Young, Prio. of the same Order, & Director of the Community.

I do, therefore, by virtue of these presents, and in testimony thereof, I have hereunto subscribed my name, this 19 day of February A. D. 1855.

Sister Mary Grignon

Witness

Sister Agnes Harkin  
+ Sister Rose Layman

The autograph record of the novice's profession as Sister Mary Grignon on February 19, 1855

A few months after the sisters arrived from Kentucky, Bishop Fenwick indicated to the Vicar General some reasons why he wished all the Dominican Sisters could be brought to Ohio:

We have called to the Diocese of Ohio four Sisters of St. Dominic from Kentucky giving them an establishment here: they already have a large number of scholars and are prospering. And we have sent other maidens, good young women, to the Kentucky Mother House to make their novitiate and then to be recalled here. . . We can never spend our aims for the Dominican Sisters of another Diocese and therefore we will strive to have them all come into Ohio where they will then be able to participate in the alms which we beg from Europe because their reestablishment . . . will redound to the good of our diocese by their undertaking the education of youth. They play the office of missionary among us.[\[37\]](#)

The residents of Somerset and its environs patronized St. Mary's Seminary, as the academy was officially called. The *Catholic Telegraph*, the diocesan newspaper, praised the work of the sisters and the excellence of their school. The enrollment grew as the number on the staff increased. The Prospectus of the school listed details of terms, the system of education, and regulations for entrance. One of the offerings was French, no doubt taught by Sister Mary (Ursula) Grignon.

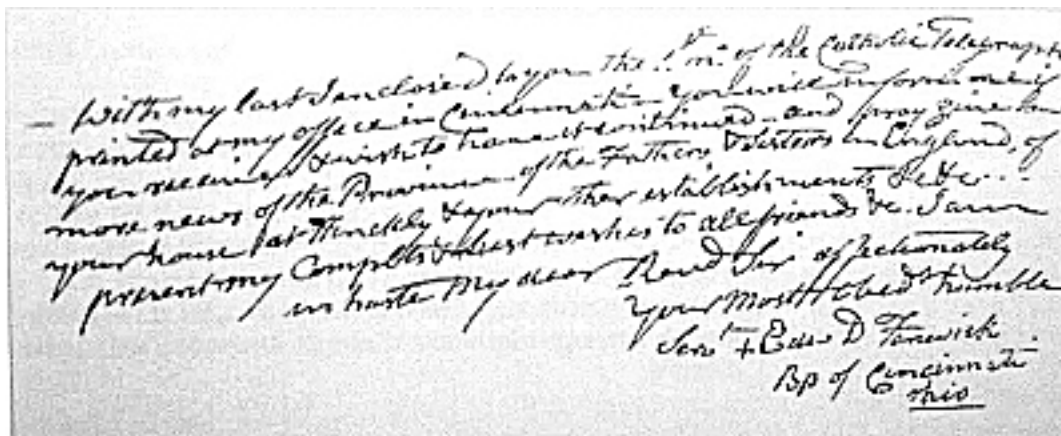
Correspondence indicates that both Fenwick and Nicholas Young continued to show concern for the sisters. Young wrote to Fenwick that "the sisters' house goes on slowly. All are well except Sister Catharine. . . . Ursula is sometimes a little melancholy."[\[38\]](#) The following March

1832, Fenwick wrote to Ursula's father, Louis Grignon, that she was in perfect health, contented, happy, and beautiful in her [Dominican] habit."[\[39\]](#) The sisters were incorporated by the Ohio State legislature under the title of St. Mary's Female Literary Society on December 17, 1832. The Act of Incorporation stated that "Elizabeth Sansbury, Elizabeth A. Harbin, Ann C. Walsh, and Julia Mudd and their associates . . . are hereby created a body politic and corporate with perpetual succession." The stabilizing effect of this act was emphasized by Nicholas Young, "I have received the Act of Incorporation for our sisters—this will save [them] much trouble and will make the institution more generally known."[\[40\]](#)

Although the Dominican friars in Kentucky maintained St. Thomas Aquinas College successfully, Fenwick felt that he could take little credit for it because he was so seldom there. However, letters indicate that his earliest plans to establish the Order in Maryland had included an institution of higher learning in Cincinnati. The bishop decided this would be a seminary to form a native clergy accustomed to the habits of the people, their language, and the primitive terrain. The seminary opened on May 11, 1829, with the best staff possible from his clergy.

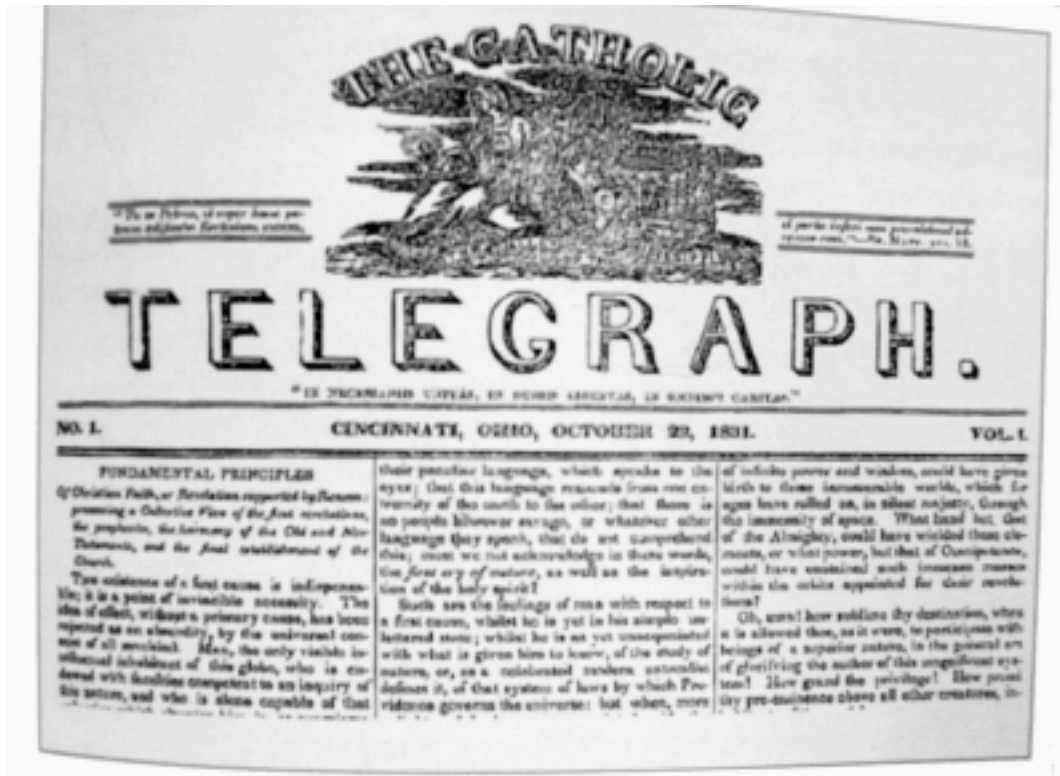
The last building Fenwick planned was a college. This was surely an ambitious project, well beyond the responsibility of a bishop on the frontier. Known as the Athenaeum, it opened in October, 1831 with Fenwick as its president. Since that position was incompatible with his other duties, the bishop named James Mullon as the president. The Catholic Telegraph listed tuition for a year as \$150, including boarding, washing, and mending. Students furnished their own beds and bedding. In addition to tuition for the regular curriculum of classical courses, there were fees for Music, Drawing and Painting, Italian and German languages. For Natural and Experimental Philosophy, each enrollee paid \$10 "to supply the many instruments usually broken by the young experimenters."[\[41\]](#)

#### Note of Bishop Fenwick to English Dominican Provincial



With my last enclosed to you the 1<sup>st</sup> of the Catholic Telegraph  
printed at my office in Cincinnati you will inform me if  
you receive a desire to have it continued - and pray give me  
more news of the Province of the Fathers, Sisters in England, of  
your house at Thimbley House - their establishments &c. &c.  
I am  
presenting my compliments & best wishes to all friends &c. I am  
in haste My dear  
Blessed Sir affectionately  
Yours &c. D Fenwick  
Bp of Cincinnati  
Ohio

The Cincinnati CATHOLIC TELEGRAPH, first issue



In addition to formal structures of education, Bishop Fenwick considered the newspaper an instrument of instruction. Beyond communicating with his own people on matters of faith, he could use the paper to answer unjust accusations constantly leveled against Catholics by Protestant journals. The initial issue of the *Catholic Telegraph* appeared on October 22, 1831. Thus Cincinnati had the honor of sponsoring the first diocesan paper west of the Alleghenies. The newspaper continues to the present time.

Tensions between bishops and men of religious orders occurred from the earliest days in the United States. John Carroll had his differences with the Sulpicians in Maryland, and Benedict Flaget with the Dominicans in Kentucky. So the strained relations that developed in Ohio between Fenwick and his friars over the ownership of church properties were not new. It is to the credit of both parties that these tensions did not impede the spread of the Gospel.

As long as Fenwick and his friars constituted the sole missionaries in Ohio, there was no problem with deeds for church properties being in the name of the Dominicans. Once he became bishop, however, Fenwick's perspective changed. His first challenge arose early in 1825. While he was in Europe during the years 1823 and 1824, his Vicar, John Hill, directed diocesan affairs. He conveyed five different properties to the Dominican friars in his own name or in the name of other members.<sup>[42]</sup> Fenwick complained to Archbishop Maréchal of Baltimore, "All this was done in my absence & by a presumptive or tacit consent on which the clergymen, my Bro. Dominicans acted." Fenwick felt he had been betrayed. He wrote to Bishop Louis Dubourg of New Orleans that he was considering the removal of Hill from his confidence. Dubourg counseled Fenwick not to engage in a fatal rupture with Hill. "Though he may be impractical and rash he is very zealous," Dubourg wrote.<sup>[43]</sup>

Previously, Fenwick himself had signed over to the Dominican Province the properties in Ohio that had been deeded to him as he journeyed throughout the state as an itinerant missionary. Now worried about his right to do so, he again asked the opinion of Bishop Dubourg. The older bishop, then serving the Diocese of New Orleans, assured Fenwick that he saw no breach of the vow of poverty in disposing of the property in favor of the Dominicans. The property had become that of his Order because the vow of poverty made Fenwick merely the agent of the transfer.<sup>[44]</sup> Francis Patrick Kenrick, theologian for Bishop Flaget of Bardstown, aptly summed up Fenwick's dilemma:

The Bishop is crucified in spirit, doubting what goods he ought to cede to his Order, what to retain for himself, what churches to be handed over to their control and with what accompanying conditions. Illustrious to be sure in purity of morals but by no means expertly informed about the Sacred canons. . . <sup>[45]</sup>

Kenrick's private judgment was that Fenwick should have put all these properties into the hands of the bishop of the diocese. The friars, unable to solve the dilemma themselves, wisely submitted the matter to officials in Rome so that preaching the Word could continue.

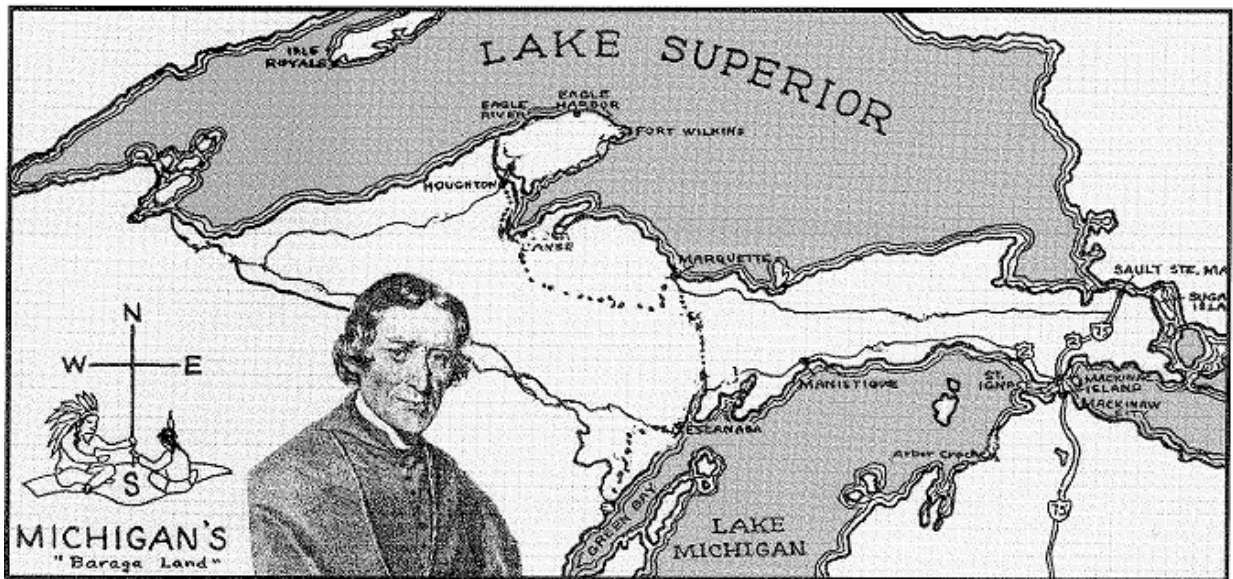
Bishop Fenwick in 1829 was able to turn his attention, at last, to a mission dear to his heart: the Indians and fur traders in Michigan Territory. From his first days as bishop, he demonstrated concern for their plight. He wrote to Stephen Badin in 1823, "I intend ... to have two missionaries travelling continually from place to place, especially devoting their labors and services to the Indians. For that purpose, it is necessary I should have a fund or fixed pension for such laborious and useful men. . . <sup>[46]</sup> In northern Ohio alone, as he told Badin, there were two thousand Indians. Some of these were Catholics who had to cross Lake Erie to Canada to have their marriages celebrated and their children baptized by a Catholic priest.

Because of the American removal policy, the Indians were pushed farther and farther west by the United States Government. As white settlers encroached upon Indian lands, no government action prevented their seizure of tribal territory. By Fenwick's time, various migrant tribes had become identified with certain locations. The Ottawas, centered in Arbre Croche, occupied lands on the eastern shores of Lake Michigan. The Chippewas or Objibwas settled at Mackinac Island near the junction of Lakes Huron and Michigan, while the Menominees remained around Green Bay, near the northwestern shores of Lake Michigan. Close to the foot of Lake Michigan, the Pottawatomies lived at River St. Joseph. Fenwick sent missionaries to all these tribes.

Besides sending available diocesan priests, the bishop encouraged his friars to seek out any Indians still remaining in Ohio. John Hill was the only Dominican of whom Fenwick wrote concerning his Ohio mission to the Indians: "His journeys took him to the shores of Lake Erie during the great heats of July and August. He made many conversions, baptized twenty-two adults, among them two Indians, reconciled four marriages and heard many confessions."<sup>[47]</sup> In the 1820s and 1830s, when Fenwick felt impelled to evangelize the Indians, some bishops of the Catholic Church seemed unmindful of these forgotten peoples. Fenwick himself visited the natives on three different occasions during the years 1829, 1831, and 1832. He praised the fervor of the native tribes for their eagerness to, hear the Word from their beloved "blackrobes."

In 1829 the bishop returned to Ohio with two fifteen-year-old Ottawa youths from Arbre Croche: William Maccatebinessi and Augustine Hamelin. He wrote to a friend abroad that he would enroll these boys in English classes in Cincinnati, and if they still had aspirations toward the priesthood, he would send them to Rome to study.<sup>[48]</sup> These were the first known tribesmen to journey to Rome as candidates for the priesthood.<sup>[49]</sup>

On the night of June 13, 1832, Fenwick and August Jeanjean, a priest of the New Orleans diocese, began what proved to be the bishop's last trip north. They reached Michigan in early July, having visited mission stations in Ohio before boarding the boat in Cleveland for Detroit. At this point the dread cholera recurred. The bishop wrote to Rese that several sailors had died from it and were carried ashore and buried.<sup>[50]</sup> The travelers reached Mackinac on July 17. There the bishop became ill. He was able only to visit his beloved Ottawas and their pastor Frederic Baraga at Arbre Croche. He could not go to Green Bay because he was so ill.



Frederic Baraga (1797-1868), missioned to the Ottawa and Chippewa tribes of Michigan by Bishop Fenwick

On Mackinac Island at the cottage of Samuel Mazzuchelli, Fenwick spent time with the intrepid missionary. His illness gave rise to a deep sense of sadness, and the prospect of death haunted him. Mazzuchelli wrote in his *Memoirs* that it pained him to see the suffering and even the sense of guilt that Fenwick endured. The young Dominican reminded the bishop of all his labors during many years in Kentucky, Ohio and Michigan and that his "upright intentions would be seen by a just and merciful Judge."<sup>[51]</sup> When he was again able to travel, Fenwick returned by way of Detroit where he found Gabriel Richard also gravely ill with cholera. He then journeyed on, stopping to minister at several places in Ohio.

The cholera only heightened Fenwick's premonition of approaching death. Weakened from years of exhausting travel, he was a prime subject for contracting the disease. He reached Canton, Ohio, before he felt the full effect of his illness. There he visited the pastor of St. John's, John Henni, and his long-time friend and teacher in the parish, Eliza Rose Powell. When Miss Powell noticed the deterioration in the bishop's condition, she determined to travel with him to

Cincinnati. This was September 25, 1832. When their coach stopped at Wooster, Fenwick went to an inn where he died the next day. Attended by doctors, he had only one person he knew, Eliza Powell, with him during his last hours. Because of fear of the spread of cholera, Fenwick was buried that day in Wooster. Later his body was laid to rest in a mausoleum at St. Joseph Cemetery in Cincinnati.

Although little has been written about Fenwick's role in preaching the Gospel in Ohio, the facts show that he led his Dominican brethren in bringing the Word to all parts of the state and revived the faith in many parts of Michigan Territory. He deserves the title "Apostle of Ohio," and remembrance of his ministry to the Indian tribes whose needs were ignored by society and even the Church. The Archdiocese of Cincinnati still benefits from institutions that Fenwick built when workers in the vineyard were few and resources were a precious commodity.

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## NOTES

1. Jacob Dittoe to John Carroll, Lancaster, Jan. 5, 1805, Archives, Archdiocese of Baltimore (AAB) 3 D 7.
2. Whaland Goodee and Major Philips, Chillicothe, OH, Feb 1, 1807, AAB 10 I 6.
3. Fenwick to A Friend in London, Washington, D.C., 1818, Saint Joseph Province Archives (SJP).
4. Conewago was an early Jesuit mission in Pennsylvania from which many settlers moved west to Somerset, Canton, Cincinnati and other towns in Ohio.
5. N.D. Young to his father Nicholas Young Esqr., Somerset, Dec. 4, 1818, SJP. In their generosity the Youngs had contributed two sums to young Nicholas for the Ohio mission: the one of \$500, the other, \$30. Elsewhere in this letter the young friar tells of losing the smaller sum kept out for traveling money; but not the \$500, which he had prudently deposited in his saddle bags.
6. **Liberty Hall**, Cincinnati, Dec 11, 1811, Cincinnati Public Library.
7. **Copied in the Catholic Telegraph**, 1858, XXVII, 4.
8. The plea published in the **Mirror** of Baltimore, signed by a committee of four men, was copied in the **Catholic Telegraph** 1867, XXXVI, 4.
9. See Thomas W. Tifft, "Ohio, Catholic Church in," **The Encyclopedia of American Catholic History**, 1997 ed., 1084-1086,
10. **U.S. Catholic Miscellany**, Feb. 24, 1827.
11. Wilson to John Hill (for transmission to Giuseppe Gaddi, Vicar General, O.P.), St. Rose, Mar. 6, 1820, Archives, Propaganda Fide, Rome (APF) IV, 608rv. At that date there were five dioceses besides the Archdiocese of Baltimore, whose bishop was Ambrose Maréchal. The other bishops were Jean-Louis Cheverus, Boston; Benedict Joseph Flaget, Bardstown; John Connolly, New York; Michael Egan, Philadelphia; and Louis Dubourg, New Orleans.
12. Flaget to Ambrose Maréchal, Bardstown, March 7, 1820, University of Notre Dame Archives (UNDA), B.C.A., Box 3.
13. Flaget to Maréchal, Bardstown, Mar. 16, 1820, UNDA, B.C.A., Box 3.
14. Fenwick to John Augustine Hill, Georgetown, MD, June 1, 1820, APF Am. Cent., IV, 610r-611r.
15. Fenwick to Propaganda Fide, Kentucky, Jan. 25, 1822, APF VII, 143rv-144rv.
16. Propaganda Fide to S.T.Wilson, Rome, July 22, 1822, SJP.
17. Fenwick to Viviani, Rome, Sept., 1823, APF IX, 117rv-118r.
18. Propaganda Fide to Fenwick Rome, Jan. 12, 1824, UNDA II 4 d.
19. Fenwick to the Italian People, Rome, Oct. 12, 1823, SJP.
20. **The Catholic Miscellany**, III, 1824, 92.
21. "Mission de L'Ohio," **Annales** (1826): 94.
22. Fenwick to (unknown), Cincinnati, March 29, 1825, **Catholic Columbian**, Columbus, Ohio, Oct., 1882.
23. Samuel L. Montgomery to O'Finan, St. Rose, Aug. 16, 1832, San Clemente Archives, Rome (SCA).
24. **U.S. Catholic Miscellany**, May 3, 1828, 343.
25. Samuel Mazzuchelli, **The Memoirs of Father Samuel Mazzuchelli**, (Chicago, II: Priory Press, 1967) 19.

26. Clicteur to Rigagnon, Cincinnati, June 28, 1829, **Annales** 514-521. Several years earlier, a prominent citizen of Cincinnati asked Fenwick's opinion of Robert Owen. The bishop wrote that Owen's philosophy "is flattering to the senses & dazzling [sic] to the mind... but confined only to temporal prosperity..." Fenwick to George Guilford, Cincinnati Apr. 26, 1825, UNDA II 4 d. This letter is unusual because Fenwick seldom wrote about political and social events of his time.
27. Baraga to Fenwick, Illyria, Nov. 13, 1829, UNDA II 4 d.
28. Baraga to Fenwick. He wrote the same letter on Apr. 5, 1830, thinking that Fenwick never received his earlier letter. Because of the union of Church and State in his native country, Baraga needed the permission of the head of State, Augustus.
29. Hill to Young, Somerset, May 31, 1825, UNDA II 4 d.
30. Fenwick to Madame la Superiore, Cincinnati, July 8, 1825, SJP.
31. Charles Maguire, OFM to Fenwick, Pittsburgh, Apr. 28, 1828, Cincinnati Archdiocesan Archives (CAA).
32. M. Agnes McCann, **The History of Mother Seton's Daughters**, vol. 1 (New York: Longmans, Green & Co, 1917) 59.
33. Fenwick to Venerable & Dear Mother, Cincinnati, May 9, 1829, Archives, Emmitsburg Daughters of Charity.
34. John H. Lamott, **History of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati** (Cincinnati: Pustet, 1921) 246.
35. Benven Sansbury, Brown Paper Annals, ms., Somerset, n.d. but after 1832, Columbus Dominican Sisters, Archives (CDS).
36. Ursula Grignon to Louis Grignon, Somerset, Sept. 24, 1831, State Historical Society of Wisconsin (SHSW) XXVIII: 26, 1831.
37. Fenwick to T. Ancarani, Cincinnati, Apr. 15, 1830, Archives General, Order of Preachers, Rome (AGOP), XIII, 03150, 140.
38. Young to Fenwick, Somerset, Oct. 4, 1831, UNDA II 4 d.
39. Fenwick to Louis Grignon, Cincinnati, Mar. 25, 1832, SHSW – Grignon, Lawe & Porlier Papers 29B: 17.
40. Young to Frederic Rese, Somerset, Dec. 19, 1832, Archives, Ohio State Legislature: 31 O. S.L.4.
41. **Catholic Telegraph**, 1, 2, 14-15.
42. Fenwick to Ambrose Maréchal, Somerset, May 26, 1826, AAB 16 W 10.
43. Dubourg to Fenwick, New Orleans, Apr. 22, 1825, SJP.
44. Dubourg to Fenwick, New Orleans, January 10, 1826, UNDA, II 4d.
45. FR Kenrick to Propaganda Fide, Bardstown, Jan. 30, 1826, APF VIII, 566rv-567rv.
46. Fenwick to Badin, Bordeaux, Aug. 8, 1823, SJP.
47. Fenwick to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, **Annales** III, 298.
48. Fenwick to M.R., Cincinnati, **Annales** IV, 521.
49. See Robed Trisco, **The Holy See and the Nascent Church in the Middle Western United States 1826-1850** (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1982) 212.
50. Fenwick to Rese, Mackinac, July 18, 1832, UNDA II 4 e.
51. Samuel Mazzuchelli, **Memoirs**, 68.