

# RECONSTRUCTING CATHOLIC FAMILY HISTORY

By James M. O'Toole

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The study of the history of the family has come increasingly to occupy the attention of professional scholars and amateur researchers alike. Once the exclusive preserve of genealogists, the life of this most basic unit of society is now being studied by a greater number and a wider variety of people. The interest of these students of the family goes well beyond a simple inventory of the trees of individual relatives and seeks instead to see the forest of historical context and understanding. Without intending to give offense to genealogists who have labored devotedly over the years, one might say that these new researchers seem more intent on following the advice St. Paul gave to Timothy against busying oneself "with myths and interminable genealogies which promote idle speculations rather than that training in faith which God requires" (1 Timothy 1:4).

This interest in family history cuts across all lines of social and religious opinion, and is today especially vigorous among students of Roman Catholicism in America. Since the study of the Catholic Church in this country began almost a century ago, most attention has been focused on the Church's leadership elite. The lives of pioneering bishops and notable missionaries were described in minute detail. Adopting a view of church history that proceeded from the top down, historians narrowed their attention to a small number of individuals who, while surely important, represented only a small proportion of the total Catholic population, which throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was growing at a truly phenomenal rate. Today, led by such scholars as Jay Dolan of the University of Notre Dame, James Hennesey of Boston College, and others, Catholic historians are more interested in an approach that works from the bottom up.<sup>1</sup> The lives of ordinary Catholic lay people, most of whom did not leave large collections of written diaries and letters, are now the primary object of study. The role of religious sisters, who were far more numerous and had a greater impact on daily Catholic life than the clergy, is being investigated. An American Catholicism that existed not in the minds of bishops but in the beliefs and practices of Catholic individuals and families is beginning to emerge.

Fortunately, the archival resources that will support this more broadly based research are now receiving careful and sustained attention. Led by the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, archival activity among American nuns is particularly lively. Religious community archivists have been participating in professional training programs in large numbers, and a published guide to women's religious-order records has appeared. The records this guide describes can be used to shed substantial light on the history of women, of education, of social-welfare agencies,

and of the family itself. Diocesan archives too are being organized on a more professional basis. Nearly two-thirds of the more than 170 dioceses in the United States have an officially appointed archivist working either full- or part-time. Similarly, a number of Catholic colleges and universities (especially Notre Dame and Marquette) are collecting the records of such lay organizations as the Catholic Family Movement, the Catholic Rural Life Conference, and the Catholic Worker Movement. These records will document lay activity at the local level and will therefore prove helpful to a wide variety of researchers with many different interests.<sup>2</sup>

What Catholic Church records help us understand the history of the family? Perhaps the most graphic way of doing this is to follow a "typical" Catholic through life and observe the records he leaves behind. Archivists never tire of pointing out that historical records grow organically out of life, and that each one of us leaves a "trail" of records behind us waiting to be discovered by historians and genealogists of the future. All of us have recently participated in that records-creation process by responding to the 1990 federal census. By following a Catholic of the last century through life, we can come to a better understanding of church records and what they tell us about family history.

We begin, of course, at birth. Shortly after a child is born, his parents present him at their parish church for initiation into the Catholic Church through the sacrament of baptism. This baptism is recorded by the parish in a special volume, called a sacramental register, set aside for this purpose. As a general rule, these registers are the only place in which baptisms are recorded; there are no central indexes or lists of names kept at the diocesan chancery office or elsewhere. Baptisms are recorded one after another as they occur. Thus the researcher needs two important pieces of information if these records are to be searched successfully: the parish and an approximate date. Some dioceses have collected registers prior to a certain date in their central diocesan archives. The Archives of the Archdiocese of Boston, for example, has collected all baptismal and marriage books prior to 1910 and most, though not all, parishes have complied. Other dioceses have microfilmed these records and keep the complete collections of these films, although there is some variation in the availability of these microfilms for research.

Baptismal records contain the following standardized information: the name of the child; the names of the parents, usually providing the maiden name of the mother; the names of the sponsors or godparents; the date of baptism and usually, though not always, the date of birth; and finally the signature of the priest performing the rite. Perhaps equally important to the researcher is the kind of information that is not included as part of the baptismal record. The precise address of the family is in most cases not given; however, since parishes usually encompass a specific geographic territory, the area in which the family lived can at least be approximated. The relationship to one another of the various people mentioned is not specified, although the appearance of the same surnames can be strong circumstantial evidence of a familial relation. If the same individuals appear repeatedly as godparents, for instance, one can make reasonably sound guesses about aunts and uncles, since the practice of the nineteenth century was similar to that of today in calling on members of the extended family to fill these roles. Finally, baptismal records never provide information on the place or country of origin of any of the parties involved. On reflection, this is not surprising. While the present

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generation of this century may be anxious to discover where their ancestors originated (in Ireland, for example), for the members of the immigrant generation, the "old country" was a place filled with hardship, starvation, and bad memories—a place, in short, that they were trying very deliberately to forget once they had arrived in the New World.

nineteenth-century records, to which most researchers will have access, will not possess such extensive information. Finally, special family situations such as illegitimacy may be observed or inferred from baptismal records. Although canon law strictly forbade making special notations in cases of illegitimacy, parish priests in this country seem uniformly to have made such notations, a practice that may give rise to some interesting speculations. Notations such as "pater ignotus" (father unknown) or simply "illegit" will occasionally appear. The question of the protection of privacy rights of both individuals and their descendants naturally becomes important here, and researchers should not be surprised to encounter reluctance on the part of church record keepers in making such records readily available.

### Certificate of Baptism



ST. PETER'S - ST. PAUL'S - OUR LADY OF PILAR CHURCH  
234 Congress Street  
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201

\* This is to Certify \*

That Richard James O'Neil  
Child of Charles O'Neil  
and Margaret Stach  
born in Brooklyn NY  
on the 20 day of October 1880

\* Was Baptized \*

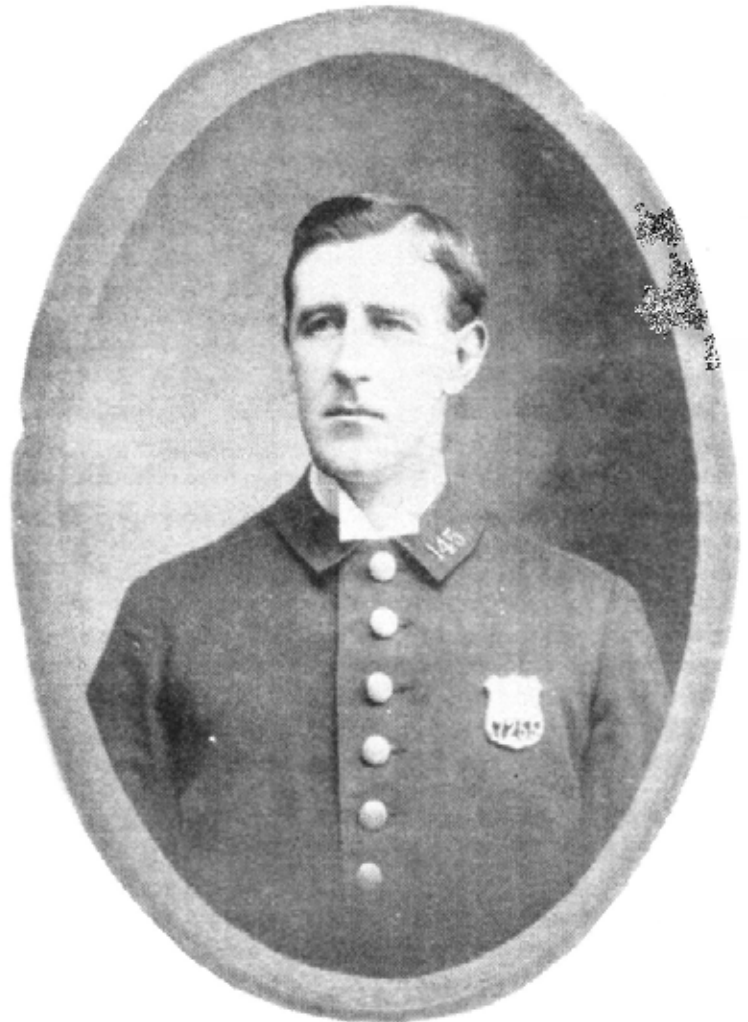
on the 31 day of October 1880

According to the Rite of the Roman Catholic Church

by the Rev. Maurice Galvin  
the Sponsors being William O'Brien  
and Jane Byrnes as appears

from the Baptismal Register of this Church.

Dated March 25 1981  
Rev. Gabriel Keal Pastor



Brooklyn Patrolman Richard J. O'Neil circa 1905

The baptismal record is the starting point in reconstructing the history of Catholic individuals and families. A number of special features of this record should be noted. Although one might expect all Catholic records to be written in Latin, the vast majority of records in this country appear either in English or in the language of the particular ethnic group served by the parish. Even when the record does appear in Latin, it follows a standard formula and so it is easy to decipher and extract the pertinent information. Second, the precise content of the record is subject to some change over time. When the New Code of Canon Law was promulgated by Pope Benedict XV in 1917—the first uniform, systematic compilation of church law ever attempted in Roman Catholicism—parish priests were required to keep extensive notes on an individual's future sacramental activity (the first reception of the eucharist, the administration of confirmation and marriage) with his baptismal record. This practice is adhered to today, while

Our typical Catholic, then, is born and baptized, and the trail of records we seek to follow has begun. Almost immediately, however, it divides and becomes somewhat confused. First of all, the baptismal record stands practically alone, and if for some reason it cannot be located, it is difficult to replace. The formal parish census, for example, is a relatively late development in American Catholic history and often cannot be used to take the place of missing baptismal registers. The census, an outgrowth of Catholic institutional consolidation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,<sup>3</sup> was based on door-to-door surveying by parish priests, but as a general rule only aggregate statistical information survives. The working documents of the parish census

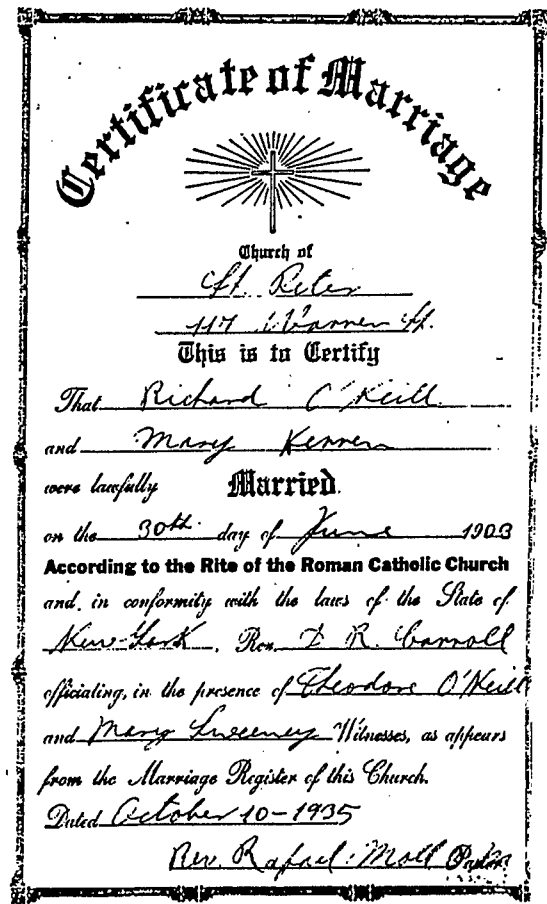
(comparable to the federal manuscript census schedules) were apparently destroyed as soon as their immediate usefulness was over. It does not happen often, but researchers must sometimes accept that the records which should have been made at baptism were, for whatever reason, simply not made. In such cases, more extensive detective work is required, including a search of public and other records.<sup>4</sup>

Unusual family circumstances can also obscure the trail. If a child is orphaned, for example, the researcher should shift attention away from parish records and in the direction of the records of the social-service agencies and institutions that have always been a significant part of the mission of the Catholic Church in the United States.<sup>5</sup> Orphanage records were not as regularly or carefully kept as parish sacramental records, but they can nonetheless be of invaluable assistance in identifying apparently missing individuals. These records offer no standard formulas for recording information. Entrance and discharge records of orphanages and homes will usually contain the child's name and age, the name of the person placing the child there, and information about when and to whom the child was released. It was customary, for example, to find farm work or other manual labor for boys and to place girls in domestic service after they had reached a certain age; records of these arrangements may still exist and say something about later careers. In the nineteenth century, it must be remembered, orphanages were not used exclusively for children who were left completely without families. If a parent was unable to support a child, whether through unemployment or because jobs required constant relocation, it was not unusual for a child to be placed in a home for a certain period of time, with the parent or other relative contributing to his support. The details of such arrangements are frequently specified in orphanage financial records, which should not be overlooked as a supplementary source to formal entrance and discharge records. Significant insights into the nature of family structure and the ways in which that structure responded to economic and social pressures can be gained from a careful use of orphanage records.

As our typical Catholic matures through childhood, parish sacramental records again become important. In addition to baptismal records, records are also kept when a child receives Holy Communion for the first time and when he is confirmed. Both kinds of records are less informative than those for baptisms. It was customary for a child to receive both these sacraments as part of a large class or group, and the records contain only the date and a listing of the children's names.<sup>6</sup> No information about the parents or where the family lived is usually included, but these records can nevertheless point the way to other data. In the first place, they can be used to determine an approximate age for a child. In the twentieth century, as a part of the liturgical reforms instituted by Pope Pius X (1903-1914), children usually received their first communion at about the age of seven, but throughout most of the nineteenth century this age was much higher. It was not uncommon for a child to receive his first communion at roughly the same time as he received the sacrament of confirmation, around the age of twelve or thirteen. A child's name on a first communion list may not, therefore, seem to say much at first glance, but it can be a vital clue in narrowing the search for other data. Second, it was common (especially with confirmation records) to divide the names into those children attending the parish school and those enrolled in the local public school. This too can assist in the location of other records that may have a higher information content.

Unfortunately, school records as such are difficult to locate.

Enrollment records, student transcripts, and other documentation serve a particular purpose when they are created, but with the passage of time, their bulk and low level of administrative usefulness make them prime candidates for mistreatment and eventual destruction. Student grade books, where they do survive, can help in approximating the age of children, but other information about the child's family will be less likely to appear. When a school closes, it commonly transfers its records to another school staffed by the same religious order of nuns or brothers. While this can help in the preservation of records, it also scatters the material widely, making the search for it difficult and usually unrewarding. Many studies of the Catholic school system, certainly a unique aspect of education in America, have been undertaken,<sup>7</sup> but these studies have concentrated on the larger administrative and sociological aspects of parochial schools. Although the family researcher will not find particular information about families or individuals in these works of scholarship, they are important in establishing the context for one key aspect of Catholic family life.



Richard J. O'Neil married Mary Kiernan on 30 June 1903 at St. Peter's Church, Brooklyn.

When our typical Catholic reaches adulthood, parish sacramental records (which are the religious equivalents of the vital records maintained by towns, cities, and states) again become the starting point for reconstruction of the family. Equally voluminous as baptismal records are marriage records, which are carefully maintained in every parish. These marriage records contain the date, the names of the two people being married, the names of the two official witnesses, and the signature of the officiating priest. In the very early years of Catholicism in this country, it was not

uncommon for all the witnesses to a marriage to sign the register themselves, but this practice had died out in about 1800. Marriage records, like their baptismal counterparts, are made only in the parish where the sacrament is administered, so access is again first by parish name and then by date. These also do not contain information about residential addresses, family relationships, or places of origin, but they may be taken as circumstantial evidence where certain suspicions already exist.

Two special features of marriage records deserve attention. The first involves the issuance of marriage dispensations. Canon law specifies that certain impediments to the validity of marriage must be removed or "dispensed" before the marriage can take place. Second or third cousins may marry, for example, but the impediment caused by their familial relationship must be resolved before they do so. Very careful dispensation records are kept in every diocesan chancery, specifying the names of the parties and the nature of the impediment. Precise family relationships can therefore be established by researchers from dispensation records and, of course, the assistance of a good canon lawyer.



Mary Kiernan (1880-1928), circa 1900

Marriage records can also be helpful if one of the parties to the marriage was not a Catholic. Although the practice was abandoned as a part of the ecumenical movement of the 1950s and 1960s, until about fifteen years ago the Church required the non-Catholic party to sign an oath before the wedding ceremony, promising not to interfere with the Catholic's religious practice and to raise all children as Catholics. This signed oath usually appears in the sacramental register immediately before the marriage to which it applies. Knowing that one of the partners was not a Catholic not only assists in the location of other records about that person; it can also be used in an aggregate way to observe

THE CHANCERY  
DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN  
75 GREENE AVENUE  
BROOKLYN, N.Y. 11238  
PHONE B-5500  
(AREA CODE 212)

April 27, 1981

Mr. Joseph Silinonte  
2061 Royce Street  
Brooklyn, New York 11234

Dear Mr. Silinonte:

In response to your request about information concerning the dispensation granted for the marriage of Charles O'Neil and Margaret Stack, the following should prove helpful.

The entry in the Book of Dispensations reads as follows (in Bishop Loughlin's handwriting):

"Charles O'Neil, son of Charles O'Neil and Ann Scott, born in Brooklyn, residing at Congress and Columbia Streets, and Margaret Ann Stack, daughter of Thomas Stack and Margaret Powers, born in New York, residing at Hicks and Sackett Streets, granted Dispensation from Banns, September 24, 1871; requested by Rev. J. Franscioli."

With best wishes, I remain

Sincerely yours,

Reverend Harry M. Culkin  
Diocesan Archivist

Letter regarding the dispensation granted to Richard J. O'Neil's parents.

patterns of intermarriage, with all the attendant implications for family structure, mobility, and immigrant acculturation.

It is at this point in the life of our typical Catholic that the orderliness and predictability of his trail of records breaks down somewhat. We will return to sacramental registers at the time of death, but through the years of adulthood a number of other sources must be identified and used. The parish is still, however, the best starting place; indeed, a number of more informal parish records can be used to tell us much about family life. In the days before printed parish bulletins or diocesan newspapers, every parish maintained pulpit announcement books, and a great many of these have survived both in parish and diocesan archives. The pastor would record in these volumes a wide variety of parish activities of which the laity needed to be aware, and these announcements would be read from the pulpit every Sunday, immediately before the preaching of the sermon. They would begin with the banns of marriage, weekly announcements of future weddings that were made in the month before the wedding day. Also included was news of the activities of parish societies, the parochial and Sunday schools, special collections for religious or charitable purposes, pastoral letters from the bishop on particular

subjects or occasions, unusual liturgical programs such as missions, and a host of other topics. The full diversity of parish life is clearly evident in these pulpit announcement books, which are invaluable sources for discovering how life was actually lived and experienced by the man and woman in the pew.

A number of parish activities will be of social interest to the historian of the family. Primary among these are the lay organizations that existed in each parish under the spiritual direction of the clergy. The men were usually organized into a Holy Name Society. The women too had their societies, usually a Sodality of the Virgin or an altar or rosary society. A number of organizations existed for Catholic children. In all cases the working of these societies followed the same pattern: regular activity with specific devotional exercises. These groups would frequently attend Sunday Mass as a body and hold a "communion breakfast" afterwards. Annual picnics or fairs were common springtime rituals. By reaching out to every individual family member, the Church became a more potent and regular force in daily life. It is easy to trace the high degree to which family life was bound up with the life of the parish.

Other parish-based organizations were designed to accomplish charitable goals. Immigrant-aid societies, common in parishes of Eastern seaboard cities, would raise funds to provide food and shelter for newly arrived immigrants. Organizations such as the St. Vincent de Paul societies collected money, clothing, and household items for distribution to destitute families. Their activities especially revolved around religious holidays. Social-service agencies, commonly known as "Catholic Charities," had appeared in nearly every diocese by the first decades of the twentieth century, and these agencies engaged in similar activities. Most religious-social organizations such as the Knights of Columbus and the Catholic Order of Forresters likewise undertook charitable work. A study of the efforts of these organizations both through pulpit-announcement books and any records they themselves may have left behind will clearly document the interaction of all the Catholic families of a parish.

Certain special religious records may also be found in parishes. Priests affiliated with religious orders (Jesuits, Redemptorists, Paulists, for example) regularly visited parishes for brief periods to preach missions. The purpose of the mission, a two- or three-week period of particular devotions, was to reawaken and intensify religious feeling in the parish and to encourage large numbers of confessions and communions among parishioners who might have been away from these sacraments for some time. Long sermons designed particularly for separate groups of men, women, children, and for entire families were a key feature of these missions. Temperance pledges were frequently made. Mission records—including sermons, temperance pledges, and generalized conversion statements—can provide an extraordinarily clear picture of the nature of early Catholic piety and devotional life.<sup>8</sup>

The researcher working in the nineteenth century should also be on the lookout for certain parish records relating to an activity that has now entirely disappeared from Catholic practice: records of lay trustees. Faced with state laws that frequently made it impossible for priests or bishops to hold church property in their own names and to bequeath it to their ecclesiastical successors at death, Catholics in many places resorted to the system that came to be called "trusteeism." Boards of laymen would be elected by the parishioners, and the title to church property would be held in their name. Not surprisingly, many of these lay boards began to assume other powers at the expense of the clergy, including the appointment and dismissal of pastors, thus taking on the character-

istics of a kind of Catholic Congregationalism and causing inevitable conflict with the bishops who had traditionally exercised these powers.<sup>9</sup> The ecclesiology of this dispute, which for all practical purposes was resolved in favor of the Church hierarchy by the time of the Civil War, need not concern us here. What is important for the study of family history are the records left behind by this movement. Trustees were usually men of some property and social standing in the community. Records about them may therefore tell us much about the socioeconomic status of particular families or groups of families.

Beyond records that are generated as a result of actual church activities, the historian of the family should not overlook the more traditional private manuscript sources used in other fields of history. When dealing with immigrant families, of course, one cannot expect to find the large collections of letters and diaries so common among better-established native groups. Even the keeping of family Bible records, such a regular practice among Protestants, was more of a rarity among Catholics, who seemed content to let the Church maintain this information, thereby making it somehow more "official." Parish priests were not, as a rule, great diarists, but where these diaries do exist they can be unusually valuable. The regular rounds of masses, confessions, and sick calls are supplemented with information on an unlimited number of other subjects, including personal counseling of individual family members. These diaries can help bring the daily activities of the people to life. A priest's diary in the possession of the Archives of the Archdiocese of Boston, for example, reports sadly on the case of a woman who came to the rectory door in 1899 to take the temperance pledge "with the assistance of two bottles of beer." To no one's surprise, this woman's backsliding was reported two days later. This is the kind of source that diminishes history as a remote, analytical study and reminds us that we are dealing with real people.

All real people weaken and die, of course, and it is at this point that the trail of records we have been following for our typical Catholic comes to an end. Many parishes maintain registers of sick calls made by the priests, recording visits to the homes of sick and dying parishioners. Unfortunately, these books do not always survive in large numbers; but when they do, they can provide information on age and place of residence. More common are registers of deaths and burials, which include the date of death, and the signature of the officiating priest. Some notation was also usually made if the dying Catholic had the opportunity to make a confession and receive the eucharist before death. The cause of death was generally not indicated, although I have seen it in some cases (most notably in the records of a German ethnic parish in Boston); cases of sudden or accidental death are likely to receive special mention.

Most Catholic cemeteries are affiliated with specific parishes and their records are therefore maintained with the other parish records. Cemetery records most often consist of lot sales and burials, usually kept in distinct series of volumes. These records do not provide much detailed information about the next of kin of the deceased, but matching lot sales in particular cemeteries may be of assistance in reconstructing large and complex families. Catholic gravestones throughout the nineteenth century generally contained less information than their Protestant counterparts, making them a rather unreliable source of data. Cemetery records are also more likely to be subject to loss or misplacement than baptismal and marriage records, since these latter two will probably have an ongoing administrative and pastoral use in the parish.

STATE OF NEW YORK  
 Department of Health of The City of New York  
 BUREAU OF RECORDS  
 STANDARD CERTIFICATE OF DEATH 14468

PLACE OF DEATH: Brooklyn  
 BIRTH: United States  
 FULL NAME: Richard James O'Neil  
 COLOR OR RACE: White  
 MARRIAGE: Married  
 DATE OF DEATH: July 22, 1914  
 I hereby certify that the foregoing particulars (Nos. 1 to 16 inclusive) are correct as near as the same can be ascertained, and I further certify that deceased was admitted to this institution on July 21, 1914, that I last saw him alive on the 22 day of July, 1914, that he died at the 11 o'clock A.M. of the cause of death; the diagnosis during his last illness was: Perforation of caecum  
 Signature: J. J. O'Neil  
 PLACE OF BURIAL: Holy Cross Cemetery  
 DATE OF BURIAL: July 25, 1914

Richard J. O'Neil died of a ruptured colon on 22 July 1914 at Holy Family Hospital in Brooklyn. He was buried in Holy Cross Cemetery on July 25th.

Cemetery records may, therefore, require a more careful search on the part of the family historian. Once found, though, they can help complete what we know of the lives of those who went before us.

Catholic Church records do not, of course, exist in a vacuum, and the wise researcher will use them in conjunction with other kinds of records to add details to the story of the past. Public records of all kinds, the genealogist's traditional source, are especially helpful. Beyond the basics of vital records, census, tax, and other public records can be compared with church records to study such topics as family size and birth rate, patterns of urban settlement, internal migration, and socioeconomic status. A fine example of a study that uses both church and civil records to good advantage is Francois Houtart's 1957 sociological study of Catholicism in Chicago, which draws some tentative conclusions about parish size and immigrant acculturation. An unpublished study of the diocesan clergy in Boston has also employed this method to reconstruct the family life and home circumstances that impelled young men into the priesthood.<sup>10</sup> The imagination of the researcher is the only limitation on the potential uses to which church and civil records can be combined to enlighten the past.

The current upsurge of interest in social history generally and family history in particular is coming along at an auspicious time. Church officials are becoming increasingly aware of the value of the archival resources in their custody and are interested in promoting the use of those resources to contribute to an understanding of the Church's role in the past. The cooperation of Church leaders, researchers, and archivists can do much to advance that understanding of the common heritage of this country's communities and families.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 See, for example, Jay P. Dolan, *The Immigrant Church: New York's Irish and German Catholics, 1815-1865* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975) and James Hennessey, *American Catholics: History of the Roman Catholic Community in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981).
- 2 See James M. O'Toole, "Catholic Diocesan Archives: A Renaissance in Progress," *American Archivist* 43 (1980): 284-93; idem, "Archives Revival and the Future of Catholic History," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 3 (1983): 87-102. See also *Women Religious History Sources*, ed. Evangeline Thomas (New York: R.R. Bowker, 1983).
- 3 John Tracy Ellis, *American Catholicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969) 124-62, for an overview of this transition from the small, missionary Church of the earlier period to the massive Church of the immigrants, who had taken over the country's urban centers in 1920.
- 4 An interesting substitute for actual parish census can be the "sacramental index" developed by Francois Houtart in his pioneering study, *Aspects Sociologiques du Catholicisme American* (Paris: Editions Ouvriers, 1957), which is unfortunately available only in French but has been recently reprinted by Arno Press. Father Houtart, in studying the formation and functioning of foreign-language parishes in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Chicago, uses this index as a way of estimating relative parish sizes. Working from sacramental records, it is possible to determine the total number of people who were born, married, and died in a given parish. These figures for several parishes can then be compared with one another and with civil-population data to estimate the size of parishes and the concentration of Catholics in large urban areas. See especially the chapter on what Houtart calls "Religious Ecology," 217-89.
- 5 Timothy Walch, "Catholic Social Institutions and Urban Development: The View from Nineteenth Century Chicago and Milwaukee," *Catholic Historical Review* 64 (1978): 16-32, is an excellent study of these institutions in their larger context.
- 6 As part of the confirmation ceremony, each child takes on an additional saint's name, and it is that new name, rather than a middle name given at baptism, which is included in confirmation records. Researchers should not be alarmed, therefore, if John Joseph Murphy suddenly appears as John Francis Murphy; if the other information (age, place, etc.) remains the same, it is in all likelihood the same person.
- 7 The best of these is James W. Sanders, *The Education of an Urban Minority: Catholics in Chicago, 1833-1965* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).
- 8 Jay P. Dolan has written an excellent study of the parish entitled *Catholic Revivalism: The American Experience, 1830-1900* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978).
- 9 No single history of this fascinating aspect of early American Catholic history exists. See, however, Patrick J. Dignan, *A History of the Legal Incorporation of Catholic Church Property in the United States, 1784-1932* (New York: P.J. Kenedy, 1935) and Patrick Carey "The Laity's Understanding of the Trustee System, 1785-1855," *Catholic Historical Review* 64 (1978): 357-76.
- 10 Houtart, *Aspects Sociologiques*; Joseph B. Fuller, "At the Very Center of Things: The Catholic Secular Clergy and the Redirection of Catholic Boston" (honors thesis, Department of History, Harvard University, 1979).

**OBITUARY.**

**Richard J. O'Neil.**

Richard J. O'Neil, a patrolman attached to the 145th precinct, died yesterday after a brief illness at his home, 62 Columbia street. He was born in Brooklyn, was educated at St. Peter's School and was a member of the Third Assembly District Democratic Club. He is survived by his wife, three sons and two daughters. A solemn requiem mass will be offered in St. Peter's Church on Saturday for the repose of his soul.

Brooklyn Daily Eagle, 23 July 1914.