

# *Among Patriots: Monsignor James W. Power and the Fight for Ireland in New York*

BY KATE FEIGHERY



**Photo:**  
*Monsignor James W. Power. Founder and Pastor of All Saints Church, Harlem, Monsignor Power had a lifelong involvement with Irish history, culture, and politics in New York City. Courtesy of Church of St. Charles Borromeo.*

**F**rom the early years of the Catholic Church in America, its leaders officially attempted to stay out of the question of an independent Ireland. Although the Irish-Americans who made up a large part of the Church's flock supported Irish freedom in varying degrees over the years, the hierarchy needed to balance this support with the desire of the larger church for a position of stability, respectability, and power in American society, where support for or affiliation with Ireland had led to charges of anti-Americanism in the past. The Easter Rising of 1916 and the events that followed, including the Anglo-Irish War and the Irish Civil War, brought the question of Irish-American support of Ireland to the forefront of national politics and religion.

Immediately after the Rising, Cardinal James Gibbons of Baltimore, the head of the American Catholic Church, encouraged his fellow prelates to remain neutral, as he was concerned that support for Ireland could be damaging at a time when neutrality was the official position of the American government.<sup>1</sup> Although most of the hierarchy and many rank and file priests toed this official line, there was a small but active group of New York priests who vigorously campaigned for Irish freedom, culture, and history, and remained intimately intertwined with the events in Ireland as they unfolded. One of the most active was Monsignor James W. Power.

## **A DEEP LOVE FOR IRELAND**

James W. Power was born on December 21,

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**Photo:**  
*The Church of All Saints, Madison Avenue and East 129th Street, about 1900. When it was built in 1883, the church was in a heavily Irish neighborhood, and became a center for Irish culture and politics under the direction of Monsignor James W. Power, pastor from 1879–1926. The church was designed by James Renwick, the architect of St. Patrick's Cathedral. Courtesy of Church of St. Charles Borromeo.*



1849 in Newtown, County Waterford, Ireland.<sup>2</sup> As a young man he attended Mount Melleray College, a Trappist monastery, where “he imbibed the breath of that deep love for Ireland that always remained the unchanged lodestar of his soul.”<sup>3</sup> He immigrated to New York in 1869, and was ordained December 21, 1872 from St. Joseph’s Seminary in Troy, NY.<sup>4</sup> His first assignment was to the Church of the Annunciation and then the Church of the Holy Cross, both in Manhattan.

In October of 1879, while serving at St. Teresa’s on Rutgers Street, he was asked to form a new parish, All Saints, in East Harlem, where he would remain until his death in 1926.<sup>5</sup> Throughout the rest of his life, All Saints would be his fulcrum, which “he loved with the strong fiber of his noble soul and almost, one might say, to excess. The whole Catholic Church to him seemed to revolve around this section and with its people.”<sup>6</sup> After thirty years, Power had built his parish up to almost ten-thousand people, with property valued at over \$850,000 (over \$18 million today).<sup>7</sup> In addition to the church, the parish had a “rectory and schools—primary, grammar, high and commercial schools, day nursery and settlement house, all of which [were] full paid and free from encumbrances.”<sup>8</sup>

Described as a “strangely retiring man... [b]risk of manner, direct in address, at times painfully reticent, quick almost to offense,” but with a “soul that was filled with gentleness and kindness and good-will to all,”<sup>9</sup> one of his most defining characteristics was his love for Ireland. He “personified the best of Ireland’s bequeathment to the United States.”<sup>10</sup> From his early years in New York, he “identified himself with every movement for the material and intellectual benefit of Ireland,” and became “known wherever Irishmen gather to better the welfare of their native land.”<sup>11</sup> In the eulogy at his funeral, Auxiliary Bishop John Dunn, speaking on his love for Ireland, stated, “At times he may have been accused of worshipping too devoutly at the shrine of his native land, and which might have evoked the intimation that it had diluted his love and loyalty. But what a monstrous suggestion it was!”<sup>12</sup>

From his first years in New York, he was involved with the Gaelic League, and served on the American Committee of the Gaelic League in the 1890s.<sup>13</sup> When a branch of the League was formed in Harlem in 1899, Power was credited in large part with its success, as he allowed “the use of the parochial hall for the meetings of the new school, and encourage[d] the movement in every way.”<sup>14</sup> He also permitted the distribution of

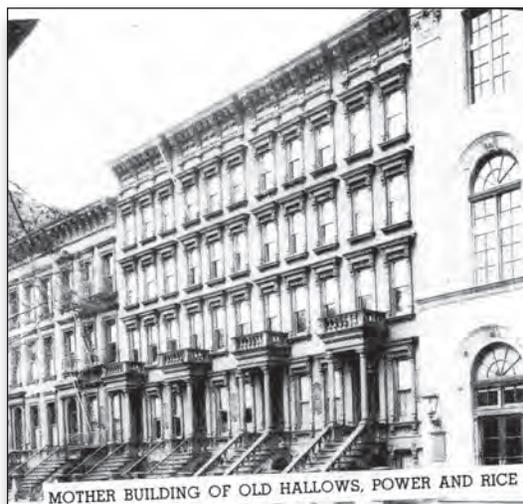
pamphlets describing the mission of the League after all masses in All Saints, which ultimately “brought over one hundred strangers to the meeting.”<sup>15</sup> Power’s reputation in Irish circles in New York was such that just his association with the new branch “auger[ed] very favorably for [its] future.”<sup>16</sup> He also served as President of the Harlem Gaelic Society which met in All Saints’ Parish Hall,<sup>17</sup> and often spoke at the meetings.

Padraig O’Dalaigh, the County Waterford-born General Secretary of the Irish Gaelic League,<sup>18</sup> speaking in America, stated that “we want Irish and Irish history taught in our schools because we want Irish education placed on a thoroughly national basis...we want to preserve it [Irish] because it is our own, because without it Irish nationality would be a thing incomplete.... If the Irish language dies the Irish nation as a distinct entity will also die.”<sup>19</sup> Power, who believed that study of Irish in America would help preserve it,<sup>20</sup> taught himself Irish, and went from not speaking it at all to fluency in less than twenty years,<sup>21</sup> often being asked to open events with a lecture or a prayer in Irish.<sup>22</sup> At the Irish Race Convention in 1916, he gave the blessing and then “recited the ‘Fair Hills of Holy Ireland’ in Gaelic and English.”<sup>23</sup>

The Gaelic League also promoted education as the path to “build up...a self-reliant, self-centered nation that shall in every respect be strongly and proudly Irish,”<sup>24</sup> which led to what might be Power’s largest contribution to Irish-America: his decision to bring the Irish Christian Brothers to teach in All Saints’ School.<sup>25</sup> In 1906, Power wrote to Archbishop John Farley, “I beg leave to petition Your Grace, with your consultants, for the acceptance of the Irish Christian Brothers to teach in the boys’ parochial schools of All Saints... unless I can have a staff from the Irish Christian Brothers, the alternative of closing the boys’ school is unavoidable....”<sup>26</sup> Jeremiah O’Leary, a lawyer and anti-British, anti-war agitator, praised Power’s decision, assuring “the people of All Saints’ that their children, under the guidance of the Brothers, would receive the lessons in Irish history which American Irish children needed so badly,” as the Brothers had a strong reputation for “good work in the upbuilding [sic] of the Irish National Cause.”<sup>27</sup> Power believed that

“American boys of Irish lineage should be taught lessons of pride in their own race and history.... The Christian Brothers of Ireland aim to bring forth [Americanism] while grounding their pupils on the principles of their religion and inspiring them with sentiments of love for the native America and yet cherishing reverence and love for their own race and ancestry.”<sup>28</sup>

The Irish Christian Brothers immersed the students in Irish arts and culture, staging plays in Gaelic, recitals, step-dancing exhibitions, and concerts of Irish music for the public.<sup>29</sup>



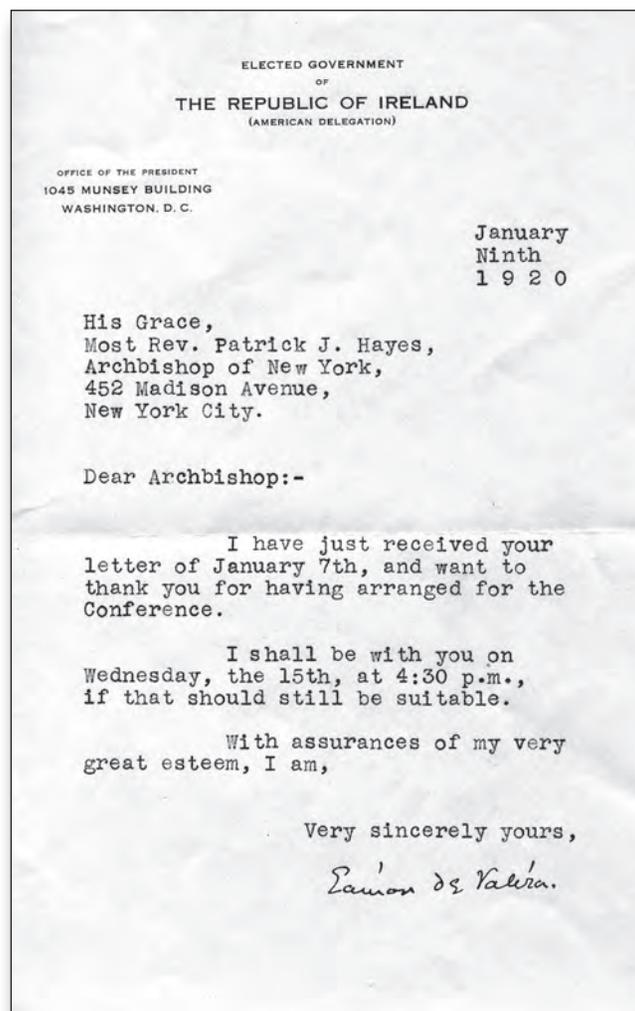
The boys performed outside of the parish as well, singing and dancing at Irish events throughout the city. Power often served as the manager for the performances.<sup>30</sup> At the Irish Race Convention, Power led the boys in singing the “Star Spangled Banner.”<sup>31</sup> Every year at the St. Patrick’s Day parade, Power “marched at the head of three hundred All Saints boys clad in the costume on the Cuculain Period—their proud earnestness of eye testifying to their understanding of the role that they and their pastor were playing that day on Fifth Avenue.”<sup>32</sup> Power later commented, “One thing for which the Irish people of America are under eternal obligations to the Irish Christian Brothers is that they banished for good and all the Stage Irishman from Catholic School entertainments not only in this diocese but throughout the country and have given Irish boys and girls an opportunity to be proud of their race for the high class entertainments of music, singing and

**Photo:**  
*Power Memorial Academy, 13-19 West 124th Street, the original home of All Hallows Collegiate Institute (1909-1931), Power Memorial Academy (1931-1938), and Rice High School (1938-1941). Power Memorial moved to 61st Street and Amsterdam Avenue in 1938. This building was sold to the Franciscan Sisters of the Most Pure Heart of Mary. Courtesy of the Congregation of Christian Brothers Archives and Records Center.*

dancing put forth by them.”<sup>33</sup> Power found in the Brothers support for his Irish nationalist leanings. A 1918 letter to Power from Cardinal Farley rebuked him for distributing “literature giving notice of Sinn Fein lectures and meetings...every Sunday” outside the Church doors, but also for allowing the “Brothers at All Saints[sic] School” to turn a portrait of “President Wilson’s face towards the wall of the class-rooms.”<sup>34</sup> From their base at All Saints, the Brothers spread into other schools throughout the city. Their reputation in Catholic education was such that “Monsignor Power regarded the introduction of the Irish Christian Brothers to America as the supreme work of his career.”<sup>35</sup> In turn, they regarded him as their patron in America,<sup>36</sup> and in 1931, after Power’s death, they opened a new high school named Power Memorial Academy in his honor.<sup>37</sup>

#### THE FRIENDS OF IRISH FREEDOM

In the early twentieth century, Power was a member of *Clan-na-Gael*,<sup>38</sup> an Irish nationalist organization established in 1867, whose objective was “complete independence of Ireland and the establishment of an Irish Republic,”<sup>39</sup> and Power often sent students from All Saints to perform at various club functions.<sup>40</sup> Through this group, Power was also connected with John Devoy, the militant Irish Nationalist and editor of *The Gaelic American*, and Daniel Cohalan, a New York State Supreme Court judge and a leader in New York democratic politics as well as Irish-American organizations like the Ancient Order of Hibernians and the American Irish Historical Society.<sup>41</sup> Devoy was an admirer of Power’s work for Ireland, often praising him in *The Gaelic American*. When Power



#### Illustration:

Letter from Eamon de Valera to Cardinal Patrick Hayes, thanking him for setting up a meeting at the Cardinal's residence during de Valera's trip to New York. Courtesy of Archives of the Archdiocese of New York.

*all traitors marking Ireland bleed  
her last drop*

# A Great Mass Meeting

Under the Auspices of  
**The Owen Roe O'Neill Council**  
A. A. R. I. R.  
Will be held on

## This Sunday Afternoon

at 3 P. M. Sharp  
**NOV. 19, 1922**  
**IN St. Matthew's Hall**  
225 West 67th Street

The following Prominent Speakers will positively  
address the meeting:

**Chairman, Mr. JOHN MARTAIN** *rep*  
"From Speakers Bureau"  
**Miss KATHLEEN BOLAND**  
Sister of the late Harry Boland - Envoy to the U.S.A.  
**Miss MARY LINDA KEARNS**  
**Major MICHAEL KELLY**  
**Rev. Father JOHN H. DOOLEY**  
**Rev. Father EWENS**

**- ENTERTAINMENT -**  
**TOM ENNIS, "The Irish Piper"**  
Will Furnish a Splendid Programme of Irish Music.  
**Exhibition Irish Step Dancers & Selection on  
the Irish Pipes.**

**Everybody Welcome      ADMISSION FREE.**

**Illustration:**  
This bulletin, advertising a mass meeting of the A.A.R.I.R., was sent to Cardinal Hayes in 1922. There are notes protesting the purpose of the meeting handwritten in the margins. Courtesy of Archives of the Archdiocese of New York.

was elevated to a domestic prelate by Pope Benedict XV in 1916, Devoy wrote, "Irish Nationalists the world over will rejoice to hear that the Very Rev. James W. Power, Pastor of All Saints' Church, New York, has been signally honored by the Pope... It is the wish of his many friends and admirers that he will be spared many a year to carry on the noble works in which he is engaged and that he will be the recipient of still higher honors."<sup>42</sup>

Devoy and Cohalan were two of the organizers behind the Irish Race Convention, held with the goal of publically recording the Irish-American position of neutrality in regard to the war in Europe. From this meeting a new group emerged: The Friends of Irish Freedom (F.O.I.F).<sup>43</sup> The main goal of the F.O.I.F was "to encourage and assist any movement that will tend to bring about the National Independence of Ireland."<sup>44</sup> Power quickly emerged as one of the most active participants from among the

clergy.<sup>45</sup> At the first executive meeting of the F.O.I.F, held on March 15, 1916, the Inisfall Branch from All Saints' Parish was named the first official branch of the Friends of Irish Freedom, an honor recognizing Power's efforts on behalf of the Irish nationalist cause.<sup>46</sup> This was the first of five New York City F.O.I.F branches that, by the end of 1916, used Catholic churches as meeting spaces.<sup>47</sup> Power would go on to serve on the Executive Committee of the F.O.I.F,<sup>48</sup> and was later named to the Permanent Board of Directors.<sup>49</sup> Soon after the establishment of the F.O.I.F, on the 24th of April, 1916, Irish republicans launched a rebellion to end British rule, with the goal of an independent Irish Republic. The Easter Rising lasted for six days, before ultimately being suppressed by the British, with the leaders captured and later executed. Feelings about the Rising in Ireland and America, in the days immediately following, were mixed with most believing it to

be a setback for Irish freedom.<sup>50</sup> The F.O.I.F., however, immediately supported the rebels and their actions.<sup>51</sup>

The institutional Catholic Church did not support the Friends of Irish Freedom or the Rising. New York's Cardinal Farley believed that encouraging the F.O.I.F. "would simply be fomenting rebellion in Ireland"<sup>52</sup> and "kept the Church officially neutral by refraining from any public comments, by enjoining his priests to silence, and by impartially sponsoring relief drives for the war sufferers in both camps."<sup>53</sup> He requested that his priests follow his lead and "refrain from any criticism of England's methods in dealing with the rebellion."<sup>54</sup>

Power, however, followed the lead of the F.O.I.F. and not the Church. On May 7, 1916, from the pulpit at All Saints, he offered prayers for the martyred rebellion leaders, and "compared [Patrick] Pearse with [George] Washington and said the only difference between the two patriots was that one succeeded while the other failed.... The British government might go on in its persecution of the Irish, he declared, but it could never crush the Irish spirit of freedom."<sup>55</sup> On May 30, Decoration Day, now known as Memorial Day, he celebrated "a Solemn Requiem Mass...for the souls of the Irish martyrs who were murdered in cold blood by the unspeakable English government. The church was thronged with men and women who showed by their presence their detestation of tyranny and their love of liberty.... Father Power said that for every one who died or suffered in the cause of Irish freedom ten others would spring up and do their part. Sprinkling the catafalque with holy water, he said: 'May the souls of all Irish men and Irish women who died for the faith and for Ireland rest in peace.'"<sup>56</sup>

As the conflict in Ireland went on, Power initially remained firmly in support of a united Irish republic and believed that the only path to Ireland's freedom was the "entire separation of Ireland from England."<sup>57</sup> In a letter to the editor of the *New-York Evening Post*, Power wrote:

*Partition of Ireland is not to be thought of.... Ireland looks to America for her sal-*

*vation and her liberty, and she hopes by the pressure of American public opinion voiced by our President that she will be saved from the disastrous measure of proposed partition. America herself fought the great Civil War, in the sixties, to save the nation from the inevitable ruin and destruction that secession and partition of the Southern States would surely bring about.... The Savior of mankind never uttered a more profound truth than when He said "A kingdom divided against itself must fall." It was on this profound truth our great Lincoln took his stand and held himself immovable until the nation was firmly planted on the rock of unity, where, with the blessing of heaven, she stands impregnable and unassailable against every foe from within or without. This is the point. If great America, with her broad dominions could not afford partition or division and spent blood and treasure against every attempt to effect it, how can a little nation like Ireland think of surviving the cruel blow that would inflict the open wound of partition, from which her life blood would ebb away against all attempts to staunch the flow.*<sup>58</sup>

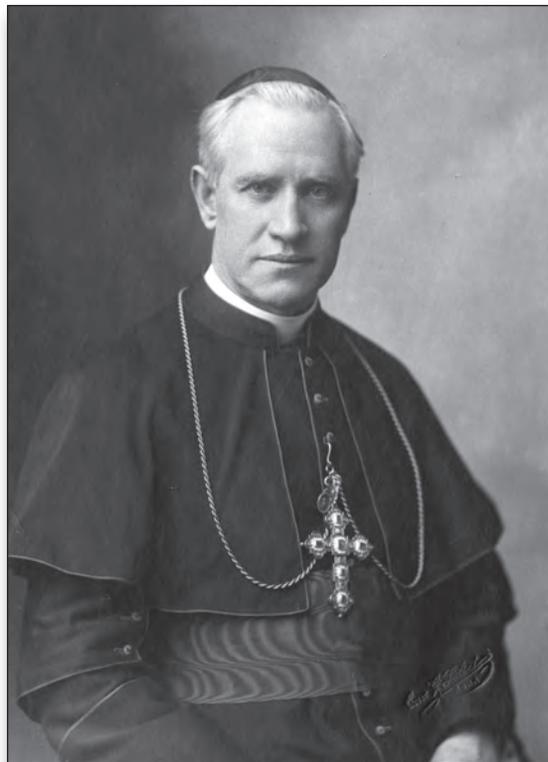
#### POWER AND THE A.A.R.I.R.

After Eamon de Valera was elected President of the Dáil Éireann, the newly established Irish Parliament, in 1919, he visited America looking both for funds for the nationalist cause as well as political support.<sup>59</sup> He believed that Irish nationalist groups in the United States, particularly the F.O.I.F., should exist to help Ireland first, and therefore take direction from Ireland, rather than leaders in America.<sup>60</sup> However, the Americans, especially Devoy and Cohalan, believed that "de Valera wanted to claim the 'credit' for all that the Friends had achieved in America."<sup>61</sup> A meeting of the National Council of the F.O.I.F. on September 17, 1920, brought the ideological divide to a head, and it was clear that could be no compromise. de Valera staged a walk-out, and the next day held a meeting to set

up his own rival organization with delegates from the F.O.I.F.<sup>62</sup> It was called the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic (A.A.R.I.R.),<sup>63</sup> whose policy would be to “act in unison with the policy of Ireland’s elected government.”<sup>64</sup> de Valera spoke at the opening conference of the A.A.R.I.R., and “declared that all existing organizations had fallen [sic] down on the work, and that the inaction of the movement in America had become intolerable to the friends of Ireland here.”<sup>65</sup> Power was one of the principal speakers, and “he charged that Justice Cohalan, Mr. Devoy and other leaders of the Friends had been using the organization for their own ‘selfish political and personal purposes.’”<sup>66</sup> The A.A.R.I.R. was “expected by its founders to supplant the Friends of Irish Freedom, and to absorb the membership of the latter organization,”<sup>67</sup> and indeed the F.O.I.F. lost many supporters, with membership in the F.O.I.F. falling from 100,749 in the fall of 1920 to just 20,000 in mid-1921.<sup>68</sup> Power later complained, “When the mass of members of the Friends of Irish Freedom were anxious to express their confidence in President de Valera..., the presidents of the branches stood between them and the expression of their wishes in this respect.... Things then looked very dark for the Irish Republic.”<sup>69</sup> Although the A.A.R.I.R. was initially popular, after de Valera left for Ireland in December 1920, it evolved in to a mostly fundraising group with little political influence.<sup>70</sup>

Despite the failed promise of the A.A.R.I.R., Power continued to support what he saw as de Valera’s organization in America. He defended its work, even to Harry Boland, who came to New York with de Valera and was at the first A.A.R.I.R. meeting, later accusing Boland of

*... building up another organization other than the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic, the great society President DeValera [sic] left behind. <sup>71</sup> Plainly your purpose in all this has been to effect a secret control of the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic.... You have completely and foolishly mistaken your place*



*and position here, which should be that of treating with Americans as an envoy and not as a brutal dictator. Hands off and let the American Association manage its own affairs and better results are sure to come for all concerned.<sup>72</sup>*

Although he had initially opposed partition, by 1920, like most Irish-Americans, Power no longer saw a future for a united Irish Republic, and backed the treaty which would end the war with Britain.<sup>73</sup> Although by late November, 1921, he claimed to have “dropped completely out of politics of Irish affairs...,”<sup>74</sup> he actively campaigned against Devoy and Cohalan after their break, writing to Archbishop Hayes, “it is heartbreaking to see the way the poor people are misled and abused by so called ‘leaders of the Race!’”<sup>75</sup> Power stated in a public meeting that if the two were ever “to set foot on the holy soil of Ireland, they would be hanged to the nearest tree,”<sup>76</sup> which led to floods of complaints pouring in from those still loyal to the two men. One writer to the *Gaelic American* complained that the members of the A.A.R.I.R. “would make a decent Irishman ashamed to be Irish.”<sup>77</sup> Still, Power believed that the separation from

**Photo:**

*Cardinal Patrick Hayes (1867–1938; Archbishop of New York, 1919–1938). Hayes supported de Valera, hosting a meeting for him with prominent New York politicians and businessmen at the Cardinal’s Residence during de Valera’s tour of the United States. Courtesy of Archives of the Archdiocese of New York.*

**Photo:**  
*A portrait of Rev. John H. Dooley. Fr. Dooley served as the first pastor (1906–1934) of the Church of Corpus Christi in the Morningside Heights neighborhood of Manhattan. Fr. Dooley was a prolific writer, often showing his support for the cause of Irish freedom through his published works. Courtesy of Archives of the Archdiocese of New York.*



F.O.I.F. was what the Irish people in Ireland also wanted. In a letter from Bishop Michael Fogarty of County Clare, he was informed, “One of Ireland’s greatest afflictions at this moment is the behavior of the Cohalan group in America. It is all dished up here in the daily papers to break the poor people’s hearts. What a time they have chosen, these Friends of Irish Freedom, to round on us....”<sup>78</sup> Power even went so far as to question Archbishop Hayes, the head of the New York church, about a rumor that Hayes had attended a meeting where Cohalan was present.<sup>79</sup> Describing Cohalan as a “restless schemer,” with “no limit to the mischief of which he is capable,”<sup>80</sup> he bluntly informed Hayes that Cohalan should never have been recognized by Hayes. Hayes wrote back, “my presence at the Irish night of AMERICA’S MAKING was not because of any sympathy whatsoever with any faction. I went there because it was Irish night.... I did not know of Judge Cohalan’s connection with the arrangements....”<sup>81</sup>

#### OTHER PRIESTS AND IRISH FREEDOM

Power was not the only priest active in the F.O.I.F. or the A.A.R.I.R. and the movement for Irish freedom. The Irish Carmelites had a number of involved priests in New York, including Rev. Peter Magennis, a Carmelite at Our Lady of the Scapular on East Twenty-eighth Street, who served as president of the F.O.I.F. from 1918–1920. In fact, his participation led to so many complaints to Cardinal Farley that the Cardinal “informed the Father that he will not be permitted to remain in the Archdiocese of New York if he attempts to preside at such meetings. Father Magennis is a member of the Carmelite Order, and does not belong to the diocesan clergy of New York. His Eminence however as the local Bishop has control of his public activities.”<sup>82</sup> Other New York diocesan priests (parishes noted in parentheses) included Rev. William Livingston (St. Gabriel); Rev. Henry Brann (St. Agnes); Rev. Francis P. Duffy (Our Saviour); Rev. Patrick O’Leary (Annunciation); and Rev. Timothy Shanley (St.

Benedict the Moor).<sup>83</sup>

Rev. John H. Dooley, a “strong believer in absolute independence of Ireland” and founder of Corpus Christi Church in the Morningside Heights neighborhood of Manhattan, was also active in the F.O.I.F, the A.A.R.I.R, and the Friends of the Sons of Ireland.<sup>84</sup> He was named New York State Director of the A.A.R.I.R.<sup>85</sup> He was a prolific writer, often using the bulletin from Corpus Christi to air his personal views on the situation in Ireland. In 1922, he used it to publish a letter from Harry Boland, which read, in part, “I regret to say that this latest phase of Ireland’s struggle is bound to be more terrible than anything that has yet occurred in the history of this most wonderful if unfortunate land.... The world will yet honor Ireland for her devotion to freedom.... Ireland is not, never was and never will be part of the British Empire....”<sup>86</sup>

His use of church publications however, was not without complaint. One writer protested to Archbishop Hayes, “The enclosed circular distributed in Corpus-Christy [sic] Church and public announcements from the pulpit at all Masses, yesterday, Sunday, certainly belittle the words of our Saviour: With malice towards none.... The pastor of the Church mentioned above, carries his personal grudge and hate too far, forgetting his Catholic duties and his vows.... Parishioners of many nationalities belong to that Church and some are bound to be hurt very deeply indeed.”<sup>87</sup> Another complained: “[A] great many Catholics hereabouts are of the opinion the Father Dooley would better attend to the duties of his parish, and the proper office of a real Catholic Priest, instead of giving expression at every opportunity to his political hatreds and animosities....”<sup>88</sup>

In addition to his writings at Corpus Christi, he served on the “editorial board of *The Sinn Feiner*, a de Valera organ,”<sup>89</sup> published by the New York-based Sinn Fein Publishing Company. The new publication was announced by the editorial staff at a meeting at All Saints’ Parish Hall where both Monsignor Power and Father Dooley spoke.<sup>90</sup> Dooley also published a book titled *Verses Concerning the American and Irish Republics*, published in 1926. One of the poems, “An Easter Morn—1916” was “Respectfully

Dedicated to President DeValera [sic] and His Surviving Companions of Easter Week, 1916.”<sup>91</sup> Another was titled “To the Irish Martyrs of 1916.”<sup>92</sup> The closing poem of the volume read in part:

*Wherever the Irish live to-day/  
Wherever their sons may be/Let them work  
and pray and lend a hand/To make dear  
Ireland free./For now is the time to strike  
a blow/To balance an ancient score,/And  
make the old oppressor know/That God  
knocks at her door./That she must pay for  
her thousand crimes,/Her lust for lands  
and gold,/For her faithless word and her  
treacherous deeds,/And for broken hearts  
untold./ Wherever an Irishman lives  
today/Wherever his sons may be/Let them  
aid by voice and sword and pen/To make  
dear Ireland free.*<sup>93</sup>

#### SUPPORT FROM THE HIERARCHY

In addition to the work of activist priests in New York, there was also more support from the New York hierarchy as the struggle in Ireland continued. Archbishop Hayes, unlike Cardinal Farley before him, took a clear stance on the Irish issue. In 1920, he personally donated \$1000 to the Sinn Fein Campaign, writing: “The present crisis in Ireland is most momentous, because it has gone beyond the bounds of a purely domestic issue, and has grown into a world problem.... The centuries old struggle of the Irish people for self-determination and self-government is to-day a matter of grave concern to the civilized world.... America surely will not refuse her moral support to Ireland.... The love of Ireland for America bursts from her very soul ....”<sup>94</sup> This public support led to complaints, with one letter writer telling him: “Perhaps you do not know that a great many American Catholics and Catholics not of Irish blood resent these politics very much.... Are you forgetting the great responsibility Almighty God has laid upon your shoulders as shepherd and guide of the Catholic church not Irish church. Why are you allowing politics to be misced [sic] up in Catholic affairs?”<sup>95</sup> Hayes also privately and publically expressed support for Eamon de

Valera: "I became the friend and supporter of DeValera the first hour I spoke to him on his arrival in America. Nothing has happened to change my opinion or confidence in him since that day. Nobody will ever be able to change me except Mr. De Valera himself."<sup>96</sup> During de Valera's visit to America, Hayes held a private meeting at his residence for "prominent Irish American gentlemen" to hold "an informal conference to afford Mr. de Valera an opportunity of speaking on Irish interests." Although assuring the invitees, who included New York Governor Al Smith and James Farley, a prominent New York politician, that "The meeting is to be without publicity, and, in no way, commits anyone present to any definite course of action," his role in organizing the group made a statement.<sup>97</sup>

While priests like Archbishop Hayes and Father Dooley remained involved in the Irish question well into the 1920s, that is, after the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty that ended the Irish War of Independence, Power, nearing the end of his life, removed himself more and more from Irish politics, focusing his attention on his parish. It is impossible to overlook the good work that he did there. Described upon his death as "good to the poor," it was noted that "within the limits of his parish stand today testimonials of varied forms expressing his love and interest in charity in its nobles figures."<sup>98</sup> He was also a supporter of the suffrage movement, stating that "that while he has the greatest respect for the memory of his father, . . . his mother would have made a better voter for empire or republic than he did."<sup>99</sup>

Though he had stepped back from active involvement in Irish affairs, Power, writing to Harry Boland toward the end of his life outlined all his work for Ireland:

*....I have been identified with the Irish cause mostly all my life. As a mere lad, I drilled as a Fenian. I was a supporter of the Isaac Butt Home Rule movement. In the Parnell and Michael Davitt Land Leagues, I was one of the founders of the Manhattan Branch of this city...and founded one of the first branches of the Gaelic League, which still exists, and is the*

*parent of twelve other branches. I acquired the Irish language. I was one of the organizers of the Friends of Irish Freedom and while it continued right helped to increase its membership and promote its interests. After they repudiated the President of the Irish Republic, I was one of the first to protest and helped to substitute in its place the new organization, the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic, and I think, in both instances, myself and friends did more than our share of effective work.<sup>100</sup>*

James Power died on February 21, 1926.<sup>101</sup> Over 1,500 people crowded the Church of All Saints' for his funeral mass, where Bishop John Dunn, in his eulogy, condensed Power's work into three important words: "He loved Ireland."<sup>102</sup>

## Endnotes

- 1 John Tracy Ellis, *The Life of James Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore 1834–1921*, Vol. II (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co, 1952), 227.
- 2 "Monsignor James W. Power," *The Gaelic American*, June 17, 1916; "Monsignor Power is Dead, Pastor of All Saints for Forty-Six Years," *The Catholic News*, February 27, 1926.
- 3 "Monsignor Power is Dead," *The Catholic News*.
- 4 "Monsignor James W. Power," *The Gaelic American*, June 17, 1916; "Monsignor Power is Dead," *The Catholic News*.
- 5 He named the parish All Saints after the church where he was baptized in Ireland ("Recognition Sunday, May 30, 2004," Congregation of Christian Brothers Archives and Records Center, p. 1).
- 6 "Last Tribute is Paid to Mgr. Power in Church Where He Long was Pastor," *The Catholic News*, March 6, 1926
- 7 "Monsignor James W. Power," *The Gaelic American*; <http://www.usinflationcalculator.com/>.
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- 9 "Last Tribute is Paid to Mgr. Power," *The Catholic News*.
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- 13 "Irish Historical Pageant," *Irish American Weekly*, March 8, 1913, p. 5.
- 14 "A New Irish School," *Irish American Weekly*, May 13, 1899.
- 15 "The New Harlem Branch," *Irish American Weekly*, December 6, 1902, p. 1.
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- 21 "A New Irish School," *Irish American Weekly*.
- 22 "The Great Irish Feis," *The Irish American Advocate*, 1919.
- 23 "Second Day's Session," *The Gaelic American*, March 11, 1916.
- 24 "Padraigh O'Dalaigh on the Gaelic Movement," *Irish American Weekly*.
- 25 "To Teach Irish Children," *Gaelic American*, September 22, 1906; Letter, Rev. James W. Power to Harry Boland, August 3, 1921, National Library of Ireland.
- 26 Letter to Archbishop Farley from James W. Power, May 5, 1906, Box I-9, Folder 1906 P–Q, Collection 005: John Cardinal Farley Collection, AANY.
- 27 "To Teach Irish Children," *Gaelic American*.
- 28 "Recognition Sunday, May 30, 2004," Congregation of Christian Brothers Archives and Records Center, pp. 2–3.
- 29 "St. Patrick's Day Events," *Irish American Weekly*, March 7, 1908; "The Shamrock Club," *Irish American Weekly*, April 23, 1910, p. 6.
- 30 "The Shamrock Club," *Irish American Weekly*.
- 31 "Second Day's Session," *The Gaelic American*, March 11, 1916.
- 32 "Recognition Sunday, May 30, 2004," Congregation of Christian Brothers Archives and Records Center, p. 4.
- 33 Letter, Rev. James W. Power to Harry Boland, August 3, 1921, National Library of Ireland.
- 34 Letter to Msgr. James W. Power from Cardinal Farley, May 4, 1918, Box I-25, Folder 1918 P–Q, Collection 005, AANY.
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- 36 "Monsignor Power is Dead," *The Catholic News*.
- 37 <http://www.powermemorialacademy.com/aboutus.html>; Power Memorial Academy was an all-boys high school that operated from 1931 – 1984. It had a strong reputation for its basketball program, and many prominent players, including Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, went through the school. The school was originally located at 15 West 124th Street, which was also the original home of All Hallows High School. Power Memorial later moved to 161 West 61st Street.
- 38 Although modeled on the Fenian movement, the group was later connected to the Irish Republican Brotherhood.
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- 40 "Gaelic League Alliances," *Irish American Weekly*, June 10, 1911.
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- 44 Tansill, *America and the Fight for Irish Freedom*, p. 189; Doorley, "The Friends of Irish Freedom," p. 68.
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- 47 Carr, *The Irish Carmelites of New York City and the Fight for Irish Independence*, 26.
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- 55 "Prayers for Irish Martyrs," *The Gaelic American*, May 20, 1916.
- 56 "Prayers for the Martyred Dead: At All Saints' Church, New York," *The Gaelic American*, June 17, 1916, p. 8.
- 57 "Monsignor James W. Power," *The Gaelic American*.
- 58 "Irish People Ask for Square Deal," *The Evening Post*, June 4, 1917.
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- 62 Doorley, "The Friends of Irish Freedom," p. 221.
- 63 "25,000 Bolt Ireland Organization in N.Y.," *The Home News*, October 27, 1920, Box O-11, Folder 1920 Msgr. James W. Power
- 64 Doorley, "The Friends of Irish Freedom," p. 221
- 65 "Form U.S. Organization for Irish Recognition," *Evening Star (Washington, D.C.)*, November 17, 1920
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