

Bishop James E. McManus Papers

**Baltimore Province of the Redemptorists Archives
7509 Shore Road
Brooklyn, New York 11209-2807**

The scope of the papers of Bishop James E. McManus, C.Ss.R., a member of the Baltimore Province of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, encompasses letters, manuscripts (including memoirs), notebooks, articles, news clippings, photographs, and sound recordings dating from the early 1900s to as late as 1983, seven years after his death. The collection is especially important—however partial—for research on the history of the Catholic Church in Puerto Rico. The Province Archives is also in possession of Bishop McManus' dissertation, a thesis completed in the School of Canon Law at the Catholic University of America, entitled "The Administration of Temporal Goods in Religious Institutes" (1937). The entirety of the collection is open to qualified researchers, with one exception related to an annulment case. Consultation of these materials will be at the discretion of the Province Archivist.

Biography:

James Edward McManus was born October 10, 1900, in Brooklyn, New York, to William and Elizabeth (née O'Loughlin) McManus. Baptized in St. Thomas Aquinas Parish at 9th Street and 4th Avenue, his first communion and confirmation were made at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, whose parochial school he attended from 1906-1914, taught by Sisters of St. Joseph. In the fall of 1914, he attended Manual Training High School on 3rd Street and 7th Avenue in Brooklyn, but by Christmas his life took a different course. In January, he entered the Redemptorist high school at North East (1915-1921), did his novitiate at Ilchester, Maryland, and completed the theological course at Mt. St. Alphonsus in Esopus, New York, in 1928. He was invested with the Redemptorist habit August 1, 1921, made his first profession as a Redemptorist on August 2, 1922 and made his perpetual profession on August 2, 1925. Ordained at Esopus by Patrick Cardinal Hayes, June 19, 1927, he was immediately sent to do parish work at Annapolis, Maryland, at St. Mary's Church. Beginning in May 1929, he did parish work in the mission territory of Puerto Rico, where Redemptorists had been present since the turn of the century. There he served at Caguas and Puerta de Tierra and their outlying barrios. Upon arrival in Puerto Rico, his most immediate task was to rebuild chapels decimated by the San Felipe hurricane. In 1932 he tended to the Leper Colony in Trujillo Alto and the sanatorium for tuberculosis patients in Rio Piedras. In 1933 he was made a member of the regular mission band of preachers, which covered the entirety of the island of Puerto Rico. In 1934, he was recalled to the United States at the request of his superiors to pursue canon law studies. In 1937, he obtained the JCD from the Catholic University of America and appointed to return to Esopus to teach canon law. He did this, under obedience, for three years, but felt that the work was neither to his liking nor suited to his interests. He asked for permission to return to Puerto Rico and remained there, serving in pastoral assignments at Aguadilla at the newly erected Church of St. Charles Borromeo until 1945, when he was named pastor of the larger parish of the Candelaria in Mayaguez. He remained there only a short while, however, because on May 10, 1947, at the direction of Pope Pius XII, he was made Bishop of Ponce, succeeding his Redemptorist confrere, Bishop Aloysius Willinger, C.Ss.R. Bishop McManus was consecrated by Bishop William T. McCarty, C.Ss.R., in the Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Brooklyn on July 1, 1947, and remained a member of the episcopate in good standing for the remainder of his life.

The Diocese of Ponce, which claimed some 800,000 Catholics distributed over 1,800 square miles, had thirty-five parishes at the time of McManus' ascendency to that See. It had been established as a

separate diocese from the much older Archdiocese of San Juan (1513) in 1924. Of the hundred or so priests then working for Ponce, about a third were Redemptorists, most of whom were American by birth. Among the notable accomplishments of his tenure as Bishop of Ponce was the beginnings of three important apostolates—the launching of three communications endeavors, two diocesan periodicals (*Luz y Verdad* and *El Debate*) and a radio station (WEUC), the establishment of the Catholic University of Puerto Rico in 1948, and the encouragement of a new Catholic political party in Puerto Rico, the PAC. The latter's emergence would raise the hackles of many on the island and although it never amounted to any serious threat to the political establishment, it was a source of controversy that drew out important issues for the people, especially over the question of nationhood and self-determination, as well as moral issues of government policies on divorce and family planning. McManus himself often felt as though it was incumbent upon him to take up adversarial positions against the actions of political leaders, but this was always, in his view, to safeguard the best interests of religion over against total state control.

In 1960, an attack of angina pectoris forced McManus to suggest the appointment of an auxiliary bishop. At McManus' request, his secretary Monsignor Luis Aponte Martinez was named that July and consecrated a bishop in October. Aponte, who McManus ordained in 1950, began in earnest and served the Bishop well, becoming the diocesan chancellor and director of development both to the University and to the new major seminary, Regina Cleri, another of McManus' projects. Aponte was named coadjutor in April 1963, with the right of succession. But by that August, the relationship he had with McManus became impaired. On August 7, Aponte informed McManus that he had been to see the nuncio, Archbishop Emanuele Clarizio, and had resigned. Stunned, McManus wrote to both men for a resolution but within a week's time it was McManus who was offering to resign—an offer he repeated several times. Clarizio acquiesced, and this opened the way for Aponte to succeed McManus, which he did on November 18, 1963. He barely lasted a year in the job. Aponte would go on to become the Archbishop of San Juan at age 43, being made a Cardinal of the Church in 1973. McManus later characterized the methods of Clarizio as "brutal." As for McManus, after some speculation that he would be made an archbishop for a six-month assignment to the See of San Juan, on November 27, 1963, he was instead appointed to become an auxiliary bishop to Francis Cardinal Spellman, serving on "the back porch" as Vicar for Sullivan and Ulster Counties within the Archdiocese of New York. Upon assuming this role he was given the titular See of Benda.

While serving the New York Archdiocese, McManus was stationed as pastor at Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish, in Port Ewan. His attendance at the Second Vatican Council was minimal and he avoided the third and fourth sessions, though he kept up with the proceedings intently. He was not disposed to embrace certain theological trends then coming into vogue and often wrote to Council Fathers with his views, notably John Cardinal Wright, though it is interesting that he did not supply these same opinions to Cardinal Spellman. The habit of making careful theological and canonical analyses of the propositions being entertained at the Council carried over to the post-conciliar period when so many of the directives issued by the Fathers were to be implemented. He often supplied the American Bishops' Conference with his expertise on liturgical law and catechetics, though he maintained a decidedly conservative point of view throughout. He grew ardently more pro-life in his final years, especially after the Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade*, going so far as to propose a special meeting of the entire American episcopate to mobilize on this issue. Beyond this work, he was content to preside at confirmations and meetings of clergy in the vicariate. The late 1960s proved to be somewhat tumultuous, owing partially to the uproar over hundreds of thousands of hippies coming to the Bethel/Woodstock music festival—a cultural event that catalyzed a split between younger and older clergy.

On June 26, 1970, Bishop McManus submitted his resignation for reasons of health at age 70 and retired to Opa Locka, Florida, to a Redemptorist parish and to be near his remaining family. Despite his health issues, he remained active up until his death, which in that year saw him covering no less than 57 confirmation assignments for the Archdioceses of Miami and New York. While visiting at West End, NJ, he suffered a massive stroke and died a few days later, July 1, 1976, in the hospital at Long Branch. The obsequies were given at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, Brooklyn, on July 5. He was buried from St. Patrick's Cathedral the next day, with Terrence Cardinal Cooke as principal celebrant of the funeral Mass. He was interred at the Redemptorist cemetery in Esopus. He was survived by his sister, Mary O'Leary, of Florida.

Acquisition and Processing Information:

The Bishop James E. McManus, C.Ss.R., Papers were given as a permanent legacy to the Baltimore Province Archives, where they are maintained. The collection was accessioned during Bishop McManus' lifetime by then archivist, Br. Barnabas Hipkins, C.SsR. Upon his death in 1976, the papers were accessioned for processing by the Archives. It was not until June 2009, however, that Patrick Hayes, Ph.D., began to process the materials. This finding aid was begun by Dr. Hayes in July 2009 in Microsoft Word.

Languages:

Materials are in English, Spanish, and Latin.

Bibliography:

Maria Mercedes Alonso, *Muñoz Marín vs. The Bishops: An Approach to Church and State* (San Juan: Publicaciones Puertorriqueñas Editore, 1998).

James E. McManus, C.Ss.R., *The Administration of Temporal Goods in Religious Institutes*, Canon Law Studies #109 (JCD diss., The Catholic University of America; Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1937).

Scope and Contents:

The McManus Papers comprise one cabinet drawer (54C) and are divided into four basic sections: biographical material; subject files (inclusive of correspondence by year); photographs; and cassettes, with one tube containing a papal bull of appointment. After one file folder of biographical information, subsequent subject file folders are listed alphabetically by title in the order of appearance in the collection. Each is numbered as well. By Bishop McManus' own admission, he kept "temporary files on things I wrote, but when I left P.R. I destroyed most of them." The collection itself, therefore, is concentrated mainly on his episcopacy and the several projects and personalities with whom he had frequent or notable contact. The files relate personal and public information relative to his ministries and include letters from cardinals and bishops of the Catholic Church, commentaries on a diverse range of theological subjects, scrap books and photographs, cassette tapes, and the papal bull of Pope Paul VI appointing McManus as an auxiliary bishop of New York. The correspondence file for 1952-1953 contain letter books that mix news clippings with correspondence and so no effort was made to separate the two. The subject files also contain considerable information on subjects in which McManus interested himself. Many of the letters give the impression of having a canonist's eye toward documenting potential problems for the record. They display not so much a scrupulous individual as one interested in the cause of rendering justice in matters that could produce ill feeling in human relations.

Detailed Finding Aid

Cabinet 54C

- Folder 1: Biographical Material
- Folder 2: Aponte, Cardinal Luis
- Folder 3: Archdiocese of New York, Vicariate Affairs
- Folder 4: Articles by
- Folder 5: Baker, Fr. Kenneth
- Folder 6: Biblical Commentaries
- Folder 7: Bishops' Pastorals
- Folder 8: Brown, Fr. Raymond
- Folder 9: Calendars
- Folder 10: Canon Law
- Folder 11: Catechetics
- Folder 12: Catholic University of Puerto Rico - Ponce
- Folder 13: Church in Puerto Rico
- Folder 14: Church History
- Folder 15: Confirmation Homilies
- Folder 16: Correspondence, 1952-1953
- Folder 17: Correspondence, 1959-1963
- Folder 18: Correspondence, 1964-1969
- Folder 19: Correspondence, 1970-1983 + undated
- Folder 20: Corsillo Movement
- Folder 21: Diocese of Ponce Financials
- Folder 22: Discourses
- Folder 23: Ecclesiology
- Folder 24: Episcopal Appointment and Consecration
- Folder 25: Holy Year Talks
- Folder 26: Humanae Vitae
- Folder 27: Illich, (Mons.) Ivan
- Folder 28: Liturgics
- Folder 29: Magisterial texts
- Folder 30: "Luz y Verdad"
- Folder 31: Marriage/Annulments (restricted)
- Folder 32: Memoirs
- Folder 33: Miscellaneous
- Folder 34: Modotti, Rev. Hugh
- Folder 35: Murray, Rev. John Courtney
- Folder 36: News clippings I
- Folder 37: News clippings II
- Folder 38: News clippings (photocopies)
- Folder 39: Notes on Second Vatican Council Documents
- Folder 40: Population Studies
- Folder 41: Puerto Rican Politics and the Church
- Folder 42: "Quero Series"

Folder 43: Redemptorists
Folder 44: Religious Life
Folder 45: Retreats
Folder 46: Rite of Confirmation
Folder 47: Rite of Ordination
Folder 48: Rite of Penance
Folder 49: Scrapbooks
Folder 50: Sermons
Folder 51: Sermon Outlines
Folder 52: Spiritual Writings
Folder 53: Testimonials/Anniversaries
Folder 54: Theological Topics
Folder 55: Woodstock/Bethel "Aquarian Music Festival"
Folder 56: Photographs
Folder 57: (unnumbered) Cassettes; one tube containing Pope Paul's bull of appointment

Last updated: January 28, 2012/pjh