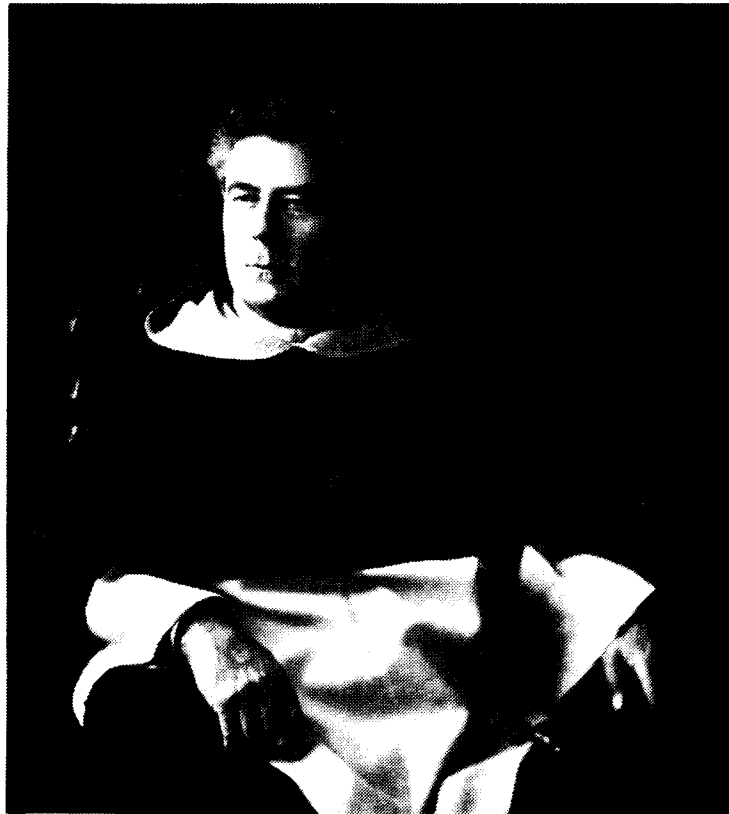


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LAWRENCE FRANCIS KEARNEY, O.P.
PROVINCIAL/THEOLOGIAN/MASTER BUILDER/ZANESVILLE PASTOR

by Anthony J. Lisska
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The Nineteenth Century witnessed much Dominican religious leadership and apostolic activity exercised in the territory now encompassed within the Diocese of Columbus. Fathers Edward Dominic Fenwick, Nicholas Dominic Young, and George Augustine Wilson, to name a few whose lives and works have been the subject of articles in past issues of this Bulletin, all helped plant Catholicism in central and southern Ohio. These three prominent Dominicans all lived and worked in the early and middle part of the last century.

To this list of zealous Friar Preachers must be added the name of Lawrence Francis Kearney, who helped bring Roman Catholicism in general and the Dominican Order in particular, in both Ohio and the nation, into the twentieth century. Kearney spent the greater part of his exceptionally creative life residing at the parish of St. Thomas Aquinas in Zanesville. His influence on the growth and development of the American Dominicans and Catholicism in the United States was extraordinary. Moreover, Kearney's role in the course and progress of the Diocese of Columbus is noteworthy. Not only was Kearney nearly named Bishop of this diocese, but his life-long friendship with Bishop James J. Hartley contributed to his establishing the first continuing Roman Catholic educational institution for young men in Columbus.

Born near Lexington, Kentucky on January 3, 1861, Kearney was the fifth in a family of eleven children. His father and mother, John and Eliza Molloy Kearney, were born in Ireland but emigrated to the United States while rather young. In the middle of the last century, they married and settled to rear their family near Lexington. His being a religious family, one brother, James, became a Dominican priest but died in 1894, a year following his ordination. A sister, Mother Francesca, was a member of the Dominican congregation of St. Catherine's near Springfield, Kentucky. She once served as Mother General of her congregation.

Young Lawrence Kearney was educated in the public schools near Lexington. There is some evidence that as a high school student he rode a horse nine miles daily to attend classes in the city of Lexington. In February, 1877, at the young age of sixteen, Kearney entered the novitiate of the Dominican Order at St. Rose Priory in Springfield, about fifty miles south-west of Lexington. One and a half years later, on August 15, 1878, Brother Francis Kearney made his first profession as a Dominican cleric.

THEOLOGY STUDY AT LOUVAIN

Educated early on in Dominican seminary studies at St. Joseph's Priory in Somerset, Kearney soon impressed his instructors as a very bright, talented and articulate student. While a student at St. Joseph's, the then Master General of the Dominicans, Father Larocca, visited the Somerset House of Studies as part of his canonical visitation. He singled out Brother Francis as a student so talented that the very best philosophy and theology preparation should be made available to him. Accordingly, in October, 1881, Kearney was sent to Belgium to complete his theological studies at the Dominican College associated with the University of Louvain. The brightest students in the Dominican Order from all over the globe were sent to Louvain for their philosophical and theological training. At that time, Father Alberto Lepidi, the distinguished Dominican theologian, was head of the Louvain faculty. Lepidi later became "Master of the Sacred Palace" in Rome, which is the name for the Pope's personal theologian. Lepidi is said to have considered Kearney as one of his best students.

Kearney was ordained at the Jesuit Church in Louvain on September 9, 1883. Because he was then only twenty-two years old, Kearney needed a special dispensation to be ordained so young. Kearney continued his theological study in Louvain for two more years, receiving the degree of Lector in Theology in July, 1885.

A fellow Dominican, Daniel Joseph Kennedy, who accompanied Kearney to Louvain, completed his studies and was ordained at the same time. Kearney and Kennedy, fellow students excelling in philosophy and theology, were stellar members of the American Dominicans during the waning years of the nineteenth century and the early days of the twentieth. Kennedy and Kearney, opposites in disposition and temperament, were life long friends. As Louvain students, both were the top contenders to be selected to deliver a philosophical disquisition during the time of the Dominican Order's General Chapter held at Louvain. Just before the General Chapter, Kearney, never of robust health, suffered a severe asthma attack which hospitalized him. Kennedy, by default, delivered the disquisition.

In September, 1885, Kearney returned to the United States to begin an illustrious career second to few in the history of Religious Orders in the United States.

THE TRAINING OF DOMINICAN NOVICES

Kearney's first assignment in the United States demonstrated that his religious, executive, and managerial talents were recognized early on. In December, 1885, at the young age of twenty-four, Kearney was assigned to St. Rose Priory in the position of Novice Master. That such a young person would be given the responsibility of training the young men aspiring to ordination in the American Dominicans was but a harbinger of things to come in the very eventful life of Kearney. At St. Rose Priory, Kearney also taught classics and Philosophy and began writing articles for church publications. The American Catholic Quarterly Review, for example, published an article discussing proofs for the existence of God. This article contains several references to his Louvain professor, Lepidi. His reputation began to grow as an engaging orator and preacher, apostolic activities for which he was much in demand later in his life.

Assigned to teach at St. Joseph's in Somerset, Kearney was elected Prior there in 1891 and served the customary three year term as the Priory's major superior. This event marks the beginning of his long career as a church administrator, which executive duties occupied a principal place in his life for most of the next twenty years. Following his three year term as Prior in Somerset, in December, 1894, Kearney was appointed pastor of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Zanesville. Zanesville was to serve as his place of residence for the next thirty years until his early death in 1924.

While the Zanesville pastor, Kearney served as "Socius" to the Dominican provincial. In his history of the American Dominicans, Reginald Coffey suggests that it was Kearney who ruled the Dominican Province during this time under a figure-head provincial. This is another indication that Kearney blossomed early as a person with exceptional executive ability. In 1896, Kearney received the degree of Bachelor of Sacred Theology in Rome following what has been called a "brilliant examination" before a board of theologians. Many documents refer to Kearney's awesome native intelligence.

ELECTED PRIOR PROVINCIAL

In October, 1897, at the remarkably young age of thirty-six, Kearney was elected Prior Provincial of the Dominican Province of St. Joseph, which then

encompassed the whole territory of the United States with the exception of California. Kearney served three successive four-year terms as Provincial, the first American Dominican to be so elected. He was re-elected in 1901 and 1905. Kearney was also re-elected for a fourth term in 1909, but the Dominican Master General in Rome overturned this election. From then until his relatively early death in 1924 at the age of sixty-three, Kearney served as the pastor of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Zanesville, the place where he made his home from the time of his first pastorate in 1894 prior to his election as provincial in 1897. Hence, Father Kearney ran the American Dominicans from Zanesville for a twelve year period and then embarked on a career as a nationally known preacher and retreat master with Zanesville as his base of operations. The Silver Jubilee of his ordination, celebrated on September 9, 1908, was a major festivity in Zanesville.

THE "ALMOST" BISHOP OF COLUMBUS

Another connection with the Diocese of Columbus, in addition to his long tenure as Zanesville pastor and resident, is that Kearney's name appeared on the list [the terna] of possible successors to the see of the Diocese of Columbus following the death of Bishop Watterson in 1899. The Dominican historian, Victor F. O'Daniel, suggests that Kearney's brother Dominicans

breathed a sigh of relief when Kearney was not selected as Watterson's successor in Columbus. O'Daniel writes as follows, "We remember distinctly that in 1899, when he was the unanimous first choice of the diocesan consultors and irremovable pastors of the Diocese of Columbus, Ohio, for their bishop, the fervent prayer of his confreres was that they might not lose him. They rejoiced when they learned that this miter had been tendered the Rev. Doctor Henry Moeller of Cincinnati." (1)



There is some evidence that his name was removed from consideration because a photograph of Kearney on a hunting expedition was sent to Rome. Kearney loved the outdoors, and hunting and the raising of prize hunting dogs were particular passions of his. Nonetheless, canon law forbade clerics to engage in what was then called "the hunt". Of course, this referred to European notions of royalty engaging in fox hunting. (2) Supposedly one of Kearney's "enemies" sent to Rome a photograph of Kearney hunting, and this event caused his name to be removed from the list of episcopal contenders. That a person

with demonstrated executive and leadership abilities was never called to the episcopacy during the growth years of Catholicism in the United States is somewhat surprising.

A NATURAL LEADER

Reading about Kearney from the distance of almost a century, one cannot be but impressed with his exploits. A born leader richly endowed with natural abilities, Kearney possessed an astounding intellect, marvelous oratorical skills, organizational characteristics common to contemporary executives, and a memory so awesome that he supposedly had the Divine Office committed to memory and could come to the Dominican choral office and chant the psalms without his breviary. Yet it is Kearney's leadership qualities combined with his tremendous ability to accomplish things which stand out and make him an ecclesiastical leader almost unparalleled for his time.

BUILDING THE WASHINGTON HOUSE OF STUDIES

Kearney was a master builder with foresight, imagination, vision and driving energy. In many ways, he was a person of action--a "mover and shaker"--characteristic of the late nineteenth century American business person. Starting with very little money in the bank, Kearney built the Dominican House of Studies adjacent to the campus of the Catholic University of America in Washington. Dedicated in 1905, this magnificent edifice built in a style its architect called Fifteenth Century Gothic still serves as the priory for training Dominican students in the eastern United States. Kearney had the foresight and drive to move the Dominican seminaries from rural Ohio and Kentucky to the national capital with connections to the emerging Catholic University of America. Kearney began this project because he knew that the Dominicans needed a House of Studies near a major academic institution, similar to many European Dominican priories, such as Blackfriars at Oxford and his Dominican alma mater at Louvain.

One hundred years after Edward Dominic Fenwick, the founder of the American Dominicans, attempted to establish a college in his native Washington area, Kearney's master plan for a major Dominican academic institution in the nation's capital fulfilled Fenwick's wish. The building of this Dominican Studium, to be known as the College of the Immaculate Conception, exemplified Kearney's optimism, confidence and vision for the American Dominicans. This optimism for growth and increased Dominican contributions to the commonweal of the Church in the United States, in a time of declining Dominican vocations and a lack of financial resources, was rooted in Kearney's deep trust in Divine Providence and in his own sense of the possibility of solving problems through hard work and energetic activity.

ST. PATRICK'S COLLEGE IN COLUMBUS

Barely had Kearney finished the Washington building project when he embarked on the establishment of what was then known as St. Patrick's College in Columbus. This institution evolved into Aquinas College High School at Mt. Vernon and Washington Avenues. Kearney saw the need for the Dominicans to have a school of their own so that they might train students both for professional and business careers but also as preparatory work prior to entry into official Dominican seminary study. Working with Bishop James Hartley,

Kearney broke ground for his secular education venture on June 23, 1905 and the building was open for students on February 6, 1906.

The story of Aquinas College High School has been told in more detail elsewhere. Nonetheless, it is important here to recall that had it not been for Kearney's dynamic leadership in working with Hartley, the Diocese of Columbus would not have had sixty years of Dominican Education on Mt. Vernon Avenue in Columbus's central city area. Again, with little money in the bank, Kearney's visionary optimism led him into fulfilling Fenwick's plan for a means to educate young American students in the grand Dominican tradition, a tradition going back to the Thirteenth Century. Early issues of the student publication, The Patrician, attest to the students's recognition of Kearney's interest and commitment to their education at his fledgling institution for young men.

(To be concluded)

1. V.F. O'Daniel, O.P., The Dominican Province of St. Joseph: Historical-Biographical Studies; New York: National Headquarters of the Holy Name Society, 1942, p. 474
2. Fr. Robert Noon, a Zanesville native who knew of Fr. Kearney, kindly provided this information.

MT. CALVARY CEMETERY, COLUMBUS
CATHEDRAL DIVISION LOT RECORDS, 1867-1926?
and Tombstone Inscriptions
(continued from Vol. XVI, Number 2)

Since reading and publication of the tombstone inscriptions began, two toppled markers have been set aright by the maintenance crews at Mt. Calvary Cemetery.

On lot B-62 (refer to the Bulletin of March, 1988, page 28), the formerly toppled stone reads "Sister -- Margaret Nerny, 1857 + 1918."

On lot B-86, the front of the Crowe monument (Bulletin of August, 1990, page 265) commemorates John P Crowe, 1842-1905; Elizabeth his wife, 1842-1906; and Edward, 1870-1899.

page 475, Mrs. Hannah O'Donnell, north half of lot 66-B, transferred from Ellen McMahan, Nov. 26, 1907; grave: Nov. 26, 1907. [no tombstones]

page 507, Mrs. James Daugherty, two graves in lot 142-B, purchased May 6, 1918; grave: May 6, 1918.

page 529, Aloysius F. Hutchins, lot 116-B, transferred to him Dec. 29, 1924 by heirs of James Naghten; grave: Jan. 6, 1925.

page 529, Mrs. Samuel D. Hutchins, south half of lot 116-B, transferred to her by Aloysius Hutchins, Jan. 10, 1925.

Samuel D. Hutchins, 1855 + 1925. May he rest in peace.
William A. Hutchins, 1885 + 1926.

page 545, Mrs. George G. Greaton, two graves in lot 140-B, transferred to her by Mrs. Mary Clary, Oct. 22, 1928. [no tombstones]

No record was found in the old lot ledger for several lots in Section B of the Cathedral Division. The tombstone inscriptions on these lots are as follows:

Lot 14-B

HANNON: Maria 1865-1871	Hugh 1859-1929
Martin 1854-1882	John 1870-1942
Mother 1830-1897	Honora 1868-1952
Father 1816-1905	

Lot 24-B

Bridget Doyle 1831 + 1886
(Mother) Margaret Tracy 1838 + 1917
Garret Rourke, Native of Knock----, Co. Galway, Ireland, died Jan. 18, 1870, aged 16 (46?) yrs.
John F. Tracy 1960 + 1927
Minnie C. Tracy 1862 + 1946
Patrick & Mary Rourke and Family

Lot 30-B, east

(Father) Frank A. Noles 1879 - 1934
(Mother) Josephine H. Noles 1882 - 1952
(Father) Michael Enright 1832 - 1899
(Mother) Mary G. his wife 1839 - 1917

Lot 30-B, west

Anthony McAndrews, born in County Mayo, Ireland 1830, Died Nov. 22, 1886, aged 56 years.
Margaret McAndrews, born in County Mayo, Ireland, Died July 12, 1901, aged 70 years.
Anthony Francis McAndrews, born Mar. 22, 1866, died Dec. 2, 1869, aged 2y 8m 10d.
Margaret, daughter of Charles & M. McAndrews, born July 6, 1889, died Aug. 20, 1889.

Lot 60-B, west

(Father) John Whelan, died March 29, 1900, aged 69 y 6 m. May his soul rest in peace.
(Mother) Mary D. Whelan, died Dec. 23, 1932, aged 92 y 9 m.
Edward J. Whelan, died Nov. 27, 1913
May their souls rest in peace.
(Mother) Julia C. English 1886 + 1938
Ellen A. Whelan, died Aug. 31, 1942, aged 73 y 1 m. May her soul rest in peace.

Lot 107-B, east

Lot corner marker "Doyle"

Lot 114-B, north

(Father) John Moriarty, died Oct. 15, 1891, aged 66 Y.
(Mother) Johanna Moriarty, died June 24, 1911, aged 72 years.
(Brother) William, son of J. & J. Moriarty, died Aug. 22, 1893, aged 30 y.

(Husband) Thomas J. Moriarty, Nov. 20, 1865, Nov. 22, 1918. Erected by his wife.

Lot 131-B, west

McCARTHY: Ann McCann 1836-1925	John McCann 1857-1909
Joseph McCarthy 1813-1874	Margaret McCarthy 1874-1911
Susie McCarthy 1868-1886	Edward McCarthy 1872-[blank]

This completes the lot ledger and tombstone inscriptions for Section B.

DONATIONS AND ACQUISITIONS FOR THE SOCIETY'S LIBRARY

Pictorial directory, West Jefferson Sts. Simon & June, 1990.
- gift of Rev. Michael Devaney, O.M.I.

Crews, Clyde F., An American Holy Land: A History of the Archdiocese of Louisville; Louisville: ikonographics, 1987.
- gift of Sr. Ramona Mattingly, S.C.N.

McEniry, Rev. E. C., O.P., Hero Priest of the Ohio Prison Fire (A tribute to Father Albert O'Brien, O.P.); Somerset: Rosary Press, 1934.
- gift of Pat Mooney

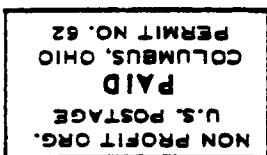
St. Joseph's Academy, 1875-1975 (a pictorial work on the history of the Columbus institution)
- gift of Marian Swickard

Viccio, Stephen J. and Sr. Virginia Geiger, S.S.N.D., editors, Perspectives on the American Catholic Church, 1789-1989.
-purchased

A multi-volume set of Cemeteries of Tuscarawas County, by the Tuscarawas County Genealogical Society.
- purchased

Tombstone Inscriptions of Greenlawn Cemetery, Chillicothe, Ross County, Ohio by the German Genealogical Society, Chillicothe, 1990.
- gift of D. M. Schlegel

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197 E. Gay Street Columbus, Ohio 43215 Donald M. Schlegel, editor



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