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The Charitable Endeavors of Archbishop John Joseph Lynch, C.M.**

Gerald Stortz

In what was considered for many years the seminal article on the subject, sociologist Kenneth Duncan theorized that the Irish famine migrants who came to Ontario went first to the farm, then to the cities, where in ghettos such as Toronto's Cabbagetown they attempted to duplicate the closely knit social networks of their homeland. Recently, parts of the Duncan theory have been called into question. Donald Akenson, for example, has argued that many Irish immigrants fared quite well in the agricultural sector.¹ However, this does not deny that many, usually those least able to make their own way, became urban dwellers.

**John Joseph Lynch, C.M. was born on February 6, 1816 in Fermagh, Ireland. He was among the early group of Irish priests who began to live in community according to the rule of St. Vincent de Paul; around 1837 he made his novitiate in the Vincentian Motherhouse in Paris. Having been recruited by Bishop John Odin, C.M. for the Texas mission, Lynch departed Ireland in 1841. Years of labor in Texas finally exhausted him, so he was assigned to St. Mary's Seminary of the Barrrens, Perryville, Missouri, where eventually he became Superior. In 1855 he traveled to Buffalo, New York and with Bishop John Timon, C.M. founded what became Niagara University. Pope Pius IX appointed him as coadjutor to the Bishop of Toronto (consecrated in December 1859 by Bishop John Timon among others); in May 1860 he assumed the position of Bishop of the diocese; in 1870 Toronto was raised to the status of an Archdiocese and John Joseph Lynch, C.M. became its first Archbishop. He died in 1888.

¹Kenneth Duncan, "the Effect of Irish Famine Migration Upon the Social Structure of Canada West" in W. E. Mann, ed., *Canada: A Sociological Profile* (Toronto, 1968), pp. 1-16; D. Akenson, "Ontario: Whatever Happened to the Irish" in D. Akenson ed. *Canadian Papers in Rural History, Volume 3* (Gananoque, 1980), pp. 204-256.

Murray Nicolson has shown that charities run by the Roman Catholic Church for the relief of her adherents in Toronto were originated by Comte Armand de Charbonnel, the second bishop of the city.² Charbonnel's pioneering work cannot be denied, but it was his successor, John Joseph Lynch, C.M., who oversaw the needs of impoverished Catholics in the midst of industrialization. It was his task to ensure that the charities already in place functioned well. He was also forced to found new charities to cope with the unforeseen problems arising out of the industrialization and urbanization. This was not an easy undertaking in a city which has been characterized as "tory and Protestant" and as "the acknowledged centre of nineteenth century Canadian Orangeism."

In Toronto, the large pool of unskilled Irish laborers became the raw material of industrialization and growth. They suffered economic and social dislocation as a consequence of the seasonal industries, short term construction projects, and cyclical factory employment in what one historian has termed "the culture of poverty."³ As leader of Toronto's Irish Catholics Lynch was well aware of the situation. He also feared a further influx of immigrants which would worsen the problem. As a means of preventing this, there was a constant campaign waged to dissuade Irish emigration. In a widely distributed, and highly controversial 1863 pamphlet, *The Evils of Wholesale and Improvident Emigration*, Lynch stressed "the degradation of city life" and complained of "the unprepared condition of the

²M. W. Nicolson, "The Irish Catholics and Social Action in Toronto 1850-1900" in *Studies In History and Politics* (1980), pp. 30-56.

³For an examination of the Orange Order's role in Toronto see G. S. Kealey, "The Orange Order in Toronto: Religion Riot and the Working Class" in G. S. Kealey and Peter Warrian, eds., *Essays In Canadian Working Class History* (Toronto, 1976), pp. 13-34; The term "culture of poverty" is used in E. Larkin, "The Devotional Revolution in Ireland 1850-1875" in *American Historical Review* (1972), 625-653.

immigrants.” Slums were described as “the seminars of crime” and it was warned that anyone considering North American urban life was risking severe damage to both body and soul. Despite such warnings, the Irish continued to leave their homeland to join their kin in urban centers.

In Toronto there were three main Irish areas, a tenement area in the Yonge-King district, a shantytown on the Din River flats, and a housing area along the lakefront. Squalor, poverty, immorality and drunkenness were common to each. Despite such problems it was natural that immigrants to Toronto would seek these areas out. Not only were these their own people who were likely to be more charitable to newcomers, but accommodation was far cheaper than elsewhere in the city. “These haunts of vice,” claimed Lynch, rendered such immigrants “lost to morality, to society, to religion, and finally to God.”⁴ Remediation was difficult, if not impossible, because of numbers. As he constantly reminded Toronto’s Catholics, “our poor are more numerous than the Protestant poor.”⁵ Partially humanitarian in nature, Lynch’s solutions also had a pragmatic side to them. Some Irish Catholics had been attracted to the higher status Protestant churches by their generous relief programs.⁶ The maintenance of existing programs and expansion into new endeavors when needed, it was felt, would stem this “seepage.” Lynch, therefore, operated a veritable network of charities, each addressing itself to a particular need. Some such as the Saint Vincent de Paul Society had been founded by Charbonnel. Others, such as the Saint Nicholas Home for Newsboys, were founded to

⁴Bishop J. J. Lynch, *The Evils of Wholesale and Improvident Emigration* (Toronto, 1963), *passim*.

⁵*Toronto Mail*, 16 June, 1886.

⁶For details of one of the most successful Protestant charities’ attitudes towards Catholics see Toronto Central Reference Library, Irish Protestant Benevolent Society, *Minute Books*, especially 8 January, 1870, 4 November 1870.

meet newly created problems. He also aided secular charities which served the Catholic poor. The Archbishop also supported social movements, in particular, the Knights of Labor. As a conservative thinker, however, Lynch eschewed more radical concepts such as the Single Tax Movement which called for the upheaval of society. What is most notable about the charitable efforts of Archbishop Lynch is that they were usually successful. And while it should be noted that in almost every case the organizations treated the effects rather than the causes of social problems, it would be wrong to be overly critical. Any attempt in the early stages of Lynch's career to be more analytical in dealing with social problems would have been anachronistic and would have gained little support. It was not until close to the turn of the century that such theories prevailed.

The cornerstone of Lynch's efforts was the Saint Vincent de Paul Society. Dominated by successful and upwardly mobile Catholics such as Frank Smith, a merchant, and brewer Eugene O'Keefe, the Society grew under Lynch. Because of the nature of the work undertaken (the collection of alms for immediate redistribution), it is difficult to gauge his direct involvement. What is clear is that Lynch had a special relationship with Society members and executives. As early as 1861, he was delegating authority to them and throughout his reign those laymen chosen to direct other charities were invariably prominent in the Society. Several new branches were founded during this time and the scope of the work undertaken was expanded to include prison and hospital visits, the distribution of religious literature, and the establishment of a lending library. Despite expansion, by 1885 the duties had become so time consuming that a ladies auxiliary was established to take over hospital visits.⁷

⁷The best general accounts of the Society are of S. McGivern S.J., ed., *The Saint Vincent de Paul Society (Toronto) 1875-1975* (Toronto, 1975), *passim*, and J. R. Teffy, "The Religious Communities" in *Archdiocese of Toronto; Jubilee Volume*

Of almost equal importance was the House of Providence. Although it too had been founded by his predecessor, contemporary observers credited Lynch with its success. Run by the nuns of the Congregation of Saint Joseph, the institution served a variety of functions. It was a home for the aged, an orphanage, and a temporary shelter for children of parents either too poor to provide for them or who had gone elsewhere to seek employment. Lynch assisted in the everyday work by acting as chaplain and making almost daily visits to the residents. The institution was also dependent upon the Bishop's annual collection for the bulk of its finances. The funds were supplemented from time to time by the revenue from public lectures delivered Sunday evenings at Saint Michael's Cathedral by Lynch and visiting notable clergymen. So successful was the Sisters' work that by 1872 one house was badly overcrowded and no further admissions could be accommodated. The short term solution was to schedule more concerts and lectures to provide direct relief to those who could benefit from it. In the long term, Lynch raised thirty-seven thousand dollars to pay for a large addition to the Power Street institutions. He also used his political influence with Oliver Mowat's Ontario government to arrange an annual grant of thirty-three hundred dollars. In Lynch's eyes, the House of Providence was a great success and "truly Catholic and heroic." By 1885 the House had once again become over crowded and the Archbishop used archdiocesan funds to erect a separate boys' orphanage at Sunnyside (on the Toronto lakeshore), thus freeing the older building for care of the sick and elderly.⁸

Lynch's charitable network included a special place for

(Toronto, 1892), pp. 242-248; For evidence of early delegated responsibility see Archives, Archdiocese of Toronto (A.A.T.), Archbishop Lynch Papers, Charles Robertson to Archbishop Lynch, 12 July, 1861.

⁸Teefy, pp. 230-236; Archives, Diocese of Charleston, Bishop Lynch Papers, Bishop Lynch (Toronto) to Bishop Lynch (Charleston), 5 December, 1881; Lynch Papers, Circular to the Clergy, 16 May, 1885;

children and two institutions founded under his auspices reflect this concern. The Saint Nicholas Institute for Newsboys was founded in 1869. Despite the name, the home was not restricted to newsboys. It was to be "a house for working boys wherein they be protected from evil society and experience at the time the comforts of a home." The St. Joseph Sisters, aided by a male superintendent, cared for up to fifty boys at a time. Funding came totally from an annual lecture given by the Archbishop.⁹

Lynch is also given personal credit for the establishment of the Notre Dame Institute in 1871. Run by the same Order, it was to be a haven for young Catholic girls who had come to Toronto to work in stores, learn a trade, or attend normal school. Lynch believed the only way such girls could avoid the evil of the urban environment was to have access to a comfortable boarding house run by a Religious Order in a respectable part of town. This stress on the proper environment was one of the reasons behind the change of location from the original location in Jarvis Street to Bond Street in 1885. The importance of both these institutions was underlined by Lynch when he negotiated directly with the Macdonald government in 1872 to obtain legislation which would have allowed him to turn over the profits of the Toronto Savings Bank to these two charities.¹⁰

The Magdalen Asylum was established in 1875 to serve those Catholic females who had, like the patron Saint, become involved in prostitution. The institution was located first on Bathurst Street but moved to the West Lodge pleasure grounds in 1879. The Sisters of the Precious Blood, whom Lynch had invited to Toronto, were in charge. Their

⁹Teefy, p. 229; J. G. Hodgins, *Documentary History of Education In Upper Canada and Ontario*, 20 vols. (Toronto, 1967), XX, 270-271.

¹⁰Teefy, p. 224; Archives, Archdiocese of Quebec, (A.A.2.) Archbishop Lynch to Vicar-General C. F. Cazeau, 11 February, 1873; Gerald J. Stortz, "Archbishop of Lynch and the Toronto Savings Bank" in *Canadian Catholic Historical Association, Study Sessions* (1978), pp. 5-19;

original task was to care for aged and infirm, as well as young girls, but in a city of rampant prostitution the latter quickly became their main endeavor. Since prostitution was centered in the Irish section of the city, Lynch considered the Asylum to be vital to the Catholic community and an essential part of the network.¹¹

These concerns about children on the part of the Archbishop went beyond religious charities and institutions. One of his major demands was that Catholic children be raised in their own faith. Any attempt by government officials to place orphaned or abandoned children in a Protestant home was met with vigorous protests. In other cases, Lynch attempted to prevent child abuse. In one case, in 1863, informed by Rochester's Bishop McQuaid that contractors on the Erie canal were mistreating child laborers, Toronto Catholics were advised not to allow their children to be recruited. Similarly, in the 1870's, programs were developed to collect British slum children and "street arabs" and ship them to Canada. Initially, Lynch agreed that Catholic children should participate only to discover that many of the children were being beaten and otherwise abused. Rather than have children subjected to such treatment, he immediately halted the program and refused to consider similar schemes thereafter.¹²

Two other institutions devoted to specific needs completed the Catholic charitable network — The Saint John's Temperance Society and the Toronto Savings Bank. The former was designed to combat the proverbial Irishman's thirst for liquor; the latter was supposed to allow

¹¹Teefy, pp. 230-241; *Globe*, 3 June 1863.

¹²The most famous custody case in which Lynch became involved was that of the Keith children. To prevent them from being lost to the Catholic faith, he personally intervened. See Lynch Papers, P. T. Dealey to Lynch, 30 April, 1883, *Irish Canadian*; 27 March, 1882, *Canadian Freeman*, 28 March, 1872; *Irish Canadian*, 29 July 1863; A. A. T. Lynch to Cazeau, 11 February, 1873; A.A.T. Letterbook II, J. F. McBride to Liverpool Catholic Children's Society, 5 May, 1887.

“the deserving poor” to save money, instill in them the virtue of thrift, and ultimately allow them to improve their lot in life. The bank was the more ambitious of the two projects and the least successful of all Lynch’s charitable efforts. An outgrowth of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, the bank was founded in 1854 to serve the city’s Catholic poor. The early years were successful but the bank did not truly serve the poor. Under Lynch, however, the situation worsened. Part of the reason was that this was an instance in which Lynch delegated authority to members of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society by appointing them to the Board of Directors. While this meant men of great ability such as Smith and O’Keefe were running the bank, so too were a number of marginal businessmen who knew nothing of the complexities of a financial institution and who, in some cases, used the bank for personal gain. Because he had entrusted the operation of the institution to the laity, it was not until complaints were made to him about the bank’s methods that Lynch realized there was a problem. When questioned, John O’Donohoe, one of the Board members, confirmed the use of “scare tactics.” A Lynch-ordered investigation confirmed loans negotiated by Directors for unqualified friends, a twenty-six thousand dollar loan to a Toronto hotel keeper on which not a single payment had been made, and one case in which a bank client had borrowed money at the Toronto Savings Bank’s lower rate and then loaned it to others at ten and twelve per cent interest. Such misuse led to a seventy thousand dollar deficit by the Spring of 1872.

Unwilling to close the bank, Lynch insisted it be returned to its original purpose. This meant, under federal law, the formation of a joint stock company by a special act of Parliament. Church control was to be reasserted because “I fear the many dangers and risks of private interests.” After lengthy negotiations which are examined in detail elsewhere, the federal government agreed only to compromise

legislature which gave the bank a ten year lease on life but severely curtailed the borrowing power and thereby limited the ability to raise money for charity. Despite his disappointment with the legislation, Lynch still believed the bank could play a vital role in helping Toronto's Catholic poor to obtain adequate housing, "thereby saving them enormous rents and bringing them from back lanes and unhealthy localities." Curiously, Lynch expected to achieve this by entrusting power to some members of the very group which had allowed the bank to incur the deficit. "The present judicious management," he insisted, "will . . . be able to assist our charities — one of the objects for which the bank was instituted." There were a few concessions made, but on the whole the bank continued to be run as a profit making institution rather than as a charity. After attempts to change the philosophy were unsuccessful, the Archbishop declared, "This mean board and committee deserve the humiliation and credit of justice." In 1877, Lynch agreed to sell the bank assets to the Home Savings and Loan Company for more than the appraised value. In what he termed "one of the best acts of my life," Lynch estimated he had saved "at least one hundred thousand dollars of the poor people's money." The newly formed institution eventually became the Home Bank. The terms of the sale revealed a healthy economic state and a fund administered by two trustees who had connections with neither the old nor new institution. They devoted the "surplus profit" annually to Catholic charities. This practice continued until the Home Bank was involved in the last great Canadian bank failure in the 1920's. Ironically, it also meant that the bank was far more effective in performing the role which Lynch envisioned for it in death than it had been in life.¹³

Of considerably greater success, and far more inter-

¹³Stortz, pp. 5-19.

ventionist in nature, was the Saint John's Temperance society. Lynch felt that poverty bred intemperance, but it was the latter problem, which statistical evidence indicates was acute among the Irish, that was treated directly. As episcopal leader, Lynch did give both financial and moral support to total abstinence organizations such as that founded by Father Mathew and Catholic Temperance and Literary Society. However, the Archbishop's personal belief in temperance rather than abstinence was reflected in the Saint John's Society. The rules were simple. Members were required to attend public lectures monthly and to receive Holy Communion at Christmas and Easter. Charitable works such as visitation of the sick were also encouraged. While the society taught self-motivation, one of the most important tasks was to entice "the weak and unfortunate" who had returned from drunkenness back to the fold. Lynch gave financial support to the Society throughout his lifetime. He also granted a number of spiritual bonuses for membership. Admission earned a plenary indulgence. With each good work performed or for the recruitment of a new member, an additional indulgence of one hundred days was granted. The member was also promised a Requiem Mass upon his death, the prayers of his colleagues, and their attendance at the funeral.

Lynch's belief in temperance rather than prohibition had two sources. The first was that Lynch himself was not a teetotaller. In fact, he is credited with introducing the benefits of a glass of port to Methodist leader, Egerton Ryerson. Lynch also believed that wine and beer were beverages of moderation as opposed to hard liquor which he termed "the curse of the Irishmen." He characterized the Irish fondness for such beverages as an "immoderate thirst for poisonous drugs . . . which leads to the commission of crimes."

Lynch's moderate attitudes led him to oppose the Dunkin Act (1864) and the Scott Act (1878). The Dunkin

Act was opposed because it called for bar closings. This, said Lynch, would simply cause more problems in the home. The Scott Act was opposed because alcohol was not the real bane. The solution was not to close the beverage industry since it would only worsen the problem as "Tens of thousands will be thrown out of employment in the hop fields, cooperages, vineyards etc." So adamant was Lynch in his argument that the satirical newspaper, *Grip*, owned and edited by temperance advocate, J. W. Bengough, began to portray him as the great enemy of temperance.¹⁴

Prison reform was also of concern to Irish Canadians, if only because they made up the majority of inmates between 1850 and 1900. As with drink, moreover, Lynch felt poverty root cause. He also recognized that many Irish were arrested for crimes committed while they were intoxicated. He showed a special concern for young offenders. Rather than sentence them to terms with older, hardened criminals, Lynch supported the growing body of opinion which called for reformatories in which rehabilitation would be attempted. He also argued that adult first-time offenders should have similar opportunities. Industrial farms or outdoor work projects designed to teach marketable skills were the answer. Such skills would lead, Lynch believed, to steadier employment, and higher wages would be as successful in reducing the crime rate as they would be in curtailing drunkenness.

The Archbishop's interest in prison life was reflected in his personal activity. At the federal level, and provincial level, also, he made alliances with Macdonald and Mowat to

¹⁴Lynch Papers, *The Rules of the Saint John's Temperance Society*, N.D., 1862; *Indulgences for Members*, Saint John's Temperance Society, 1862; *Canadian Freeman*; 25 December, 1862, 29 January, 1863; E. Ryerson to S. Ryerson, 15 July, 1862. Cited in C. B. Sissons ed., *My Dearest Sophie* (Toronto, 1955), pp. 521-56; Lynch Papers, L. Neeley to Lynch, 2 August, 1879; Lynch to Father Fell, 8 August, 1862; *Irish Canadian*, 19 July, 1876; *Globe*, 11 June, 1887; *Toronto Tribune and Catholic Vindication*, 24 February, 1876 *Globe*, 28 April, 1885; *Grip*, 9 May, 1885; 30 October, 1886.

ensure that appointees treated Catholics well. At the municipal level, this was not as simple a task. In particular, the operation of the Toronto Central Prison became of concern to Lynch in the years before his death. In November 1886, Lynch charged the prison Superintendent, Massie, with anti-Catholicism. The *Toronto Mail*, an ultra-Protestant newspaper, immediately took Massie's side. It charged that Lynch was mismanaging the funds allocated for a Catholic prison chaplain. A further campaign to have Massie removed was instituted by the Archbishop when the *Irish Canadian* confirmed in a series of articles that Catholic prisoners had been selectively maltreated. Despite the Archbishop's efforts, however, Massie was not removed. When the charges could not be proven, Lynch avoided a libel suit only when two of his subordinates claimed that they and not the Archbishops had made the allegations public.¹⁵

A more prolonged and an ultimately more successful controversy surrounded the operation of the Toronto General Hospital. The Archbishop believed the institution should provide free care to the poor of the city. Straitened financial circumstances created little enthusiasm for this among the Board of Directors. After Lynch and Vicar-General John Francis Jamot toured the hospital in 1867, it was proposed that the Sisters of Charity take over the day to day operation. They could administer the hospital effectively, and necessary repairs and maintenance could be carried out by inmates of the city jail. The money thereby

¹⁵D. G. Conner, "The Irish Canadian: Image and Self Image." M. A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1976, pp. 74-75; *Globe*, 29 May, 1883; D. G. Wetherell, "To Discipline and Train; Adult Rehabilitation Programmes In Ontario Prisons 1874-1900" in *Histoire Sociale-Social History* 12, (1979), 164; *Globe*, 16 September, 1887; Public Archives of Canada (P.A.C.), Sir John A. Macdonald Papers, Sir John A. Macdonald to Bishop John Walsh, 17 July, 1869; Lynch Papers, Lynch to Trustees, Toronto General Hospital, 13 April, 1885. (Although addressed as such, the letter complained of prison conditions); *Mail*, 2 November, 1886; *Globe*, 24 December, 1886; Lynch Papers, R. L. McCabe to Lynch, 2 November 1886; R. McCann to Lynch, 2 November, 1886; *Irish Canadian*, 11 September, 1884; 9 April, 1885; *Toronto World*, 30 July, 1885.

saved could be used to treat the poor. The plan was refused. According to the *Globe*, a majority of Torontonians would object to having a secular hospital staffed by Catholic nuns. Lynch maintained that he understood the problem but continued to press the scheme into 1867 when the hospital was *forced by debt to close temporarily*.

As money continued to be a problem, the hospital, once reopened, refused to treat charity cases. By 1873, Lynch was again urging City Council to allow him to establish a separate hospital for the impoverished. Council refused, claiming it could not interfere with the General Hospital Board. Lynch restated his position by publishing a pamphlet claiming that the Sisters of Charity could save one thousand and forty-two dollars per year in the administration of the institution. Again the Trustees rejected the scheme, reacting, at the same time, to what they construed as charges of mismanagement. The Board countercharged that Lynch was less interested in patients' health and welfare than in their religious practices. Lynch denied this was the case but did note "Bible readers and tract distributors are assiduously and almost daily at work there."

After this third rejection, Lynch seems to have abandoned the scheme involving the Sisters of Charity. When the General Hospital could not accept the poor, other institutions intervened. Ultimately the Catholic poor could be served at Saint Michael's Hospital. However, the motivation for the hospital stemmed partly from Lynch's fear of the treatment accorded Catholics; in 1885 for example, the Archbishop learned that Protestant tracts were being distributed at Toronto General. "If they [Catholics]," he complained, "treat them [the distributors] as they deserve, they are punished by the protestant nurses." Lynch also claimed that patients "have the idea that they will be treated with the utmost vigor if they do not receive these tracts with their offensive pictures." Such conflicts, however, tended to be short term problems which were

eventually resolved.¹⁶

Other medical institutions which served Toronto Catholics were also the concern of the Archbishop. In some cases, this meant only that a priest was provided to care for the spiritual needs of the inmates. In other cases, more positive action was taken. Lynch was responsible for the establishment in 1862 of Toronto's Saint Joseph Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb. The Archbishop also demonstrated a keen interest in the Ontario Institute for the Deaf and Dumb at Belleville. So much was this so that one staff member claimed in 1878 that "Whatever has been done in the beginning for the deafmutes of Ontario was accomplished by your solicitude and zeal."¹⁷

Lynch also worked tirelessly on behalf of more general charities. These included the House of Industry and more esoteric groups such as those seeking to establish a public library as well as more specialized study centers. He also became involved in the fight for public baths. The Archbishop tried unsuccessfully to convince City Council that the baths would encourage cleanliness and therefore be of benefit to the entire city. A better reception was given to his call for the establishment of soup kitchens to alleviate the suffering of the poor in the lean years of the 1860's and 1870's.¹⁸

¹⁶*Globe*, 5 October, 1867; 9 October, 1867; Archdiocese of Kingston, Bishop Horan Papers, Bishop Lynch to Bishop Horan, 8 March, 1867; Toronto City Council, *Minutes*, 7 October, 1867; *Canadian Freeman*, 17 October, 1867; 17 October, 1867; Archives, Diocese of Peterborough, Bishop Jamot Papers, Bishop Jamot to Doctor Charles Lawlor, 10 February, 1868; W. G. Cosbie, *The Toronto General Hospital 1819-1965*; *A Chronicle* (Toronto, 1975), pp. 76-78; *Globe*, 13 March, 1873; Lynch Papers, Lynch to Toronto General Hospital, Board of Trustees, 13 April, 1885.

¹⁷Lynch Papers, Sir John A. Macdonald to Lynch, 27 January, 1872. Archives of Ontario (AAO), Sir Oliver Mowat Papers, P. Fitzgerald to Sir Oliver Mowat, 24 April, 1882; *Canadian Freeman*, 10 April, 1862; Lynch Papers, P. D. Crifs to Lynch, 9 April, 1878.

¹⁸Lynch Papers, Report on the House of Industry, 1882, J. Bains to Lynch, 13 February, 1886; J. Chrafer to Lynch, n.d., 1879; City Council, *Minutes*, 2

Perhaps Lynch's most radical action came in connection with relations between the Knights of Labor and the Church. As Ontario rapidly became urbanized and industrialized, the nature of industrial relations changed. Paternalistic employers were replaced by a large, impersonal factory system. A problem which soon arose was whether workers had the right to organize and bargain collectively. Lynch argued that such a right existed and gave his approval to labor organization. He also played an important role in gaining Church approval for the Knights. There is, however, no indication that he ever went so far as to intervene in labor disputes on behalf of Catholic employees to ensure that Catholic employers acted as they should.

Lynch had demonstrated his sympathies for unionism as early as 1868. Many of the French-Canadian bishops had forbidden their adherents from joining the International Typographers Union. Lynch was able to moderate the dispute and gain Church approval for the organization. In 1873, Lynch granted approval to the efforts of the Moulder's Union. It was, he declared, "a society for self protection . . . necessary in the days of money monopolies." Unions were, he said, "a way of securing for our people the daily bread of both body and soul." Similarly, the Archbishop supported the Locomotive Engineer's fight the same year for an end to Sunday freight trains. He declared "no class of men is more deserving . . . and none deserve to be better remunerated for their services." Later, Lynch freely lent his name to campaigns for half holidays for shop girls and chairs for those women employed in factories. By the time the Knights of Labor arrived in Canada, Lynch had a well deserved reputation as a friend of the workingman.¹⁹

August, 1873; Lynch Papers, R. Roddy to Lynch, 15 September, 1875; *Minutes*, Appendix 125, 1862.

¹⁹Henry J. Browne, *The Catholic Church and the Knights of Labor* (Washington, 1949), p. 110; Lynch Papers, Lynch to J. F. Wagner, 30 April, 1873, Lynch to Robert Pearson, 29 April, 1873; J. F. McBride to Margaret Stephenson, 18 January, 1877; *Globe*, 21 January, 1887.

The Knights, an industrial union headed by Terence V. Powderley, a nominally Catholic Irishman, was dedicated to "raise the wage earner above the narrow view of . . . his trade or job." Although pledged to avoid strikes, the Knights had a reputation for violence. This reputation, coupled with involvement in several unsuccessful strikes, led eventually to their demise, but in the 1880's the immediate problem was religion. In the United States, it was the Protestant Clergy who opposed the union. In Canada, the Quebec Roman Catholic hierarchy, led by Archbishop Taschereau, presented the opposition. According to Taschereau, because entry into the Knights involved a secret oath, the organization was in the same category as the Freemasons who had been condemned by Papal authorities. He also argued that since secrecy was necessary for union activities, the relationship between a Catholic Knight and his confessor would be interrupted. Therefore, declared Taschereau, Catholics who did join the Knights should be denied the Sacraments. The declaration was made in 1884 and reiterated in 1886. On the second occasion, the North American hierarchy split into two factions. The predominantly Irish faction led by James Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore defended the Knights. The other group, made up primarily of the French-Canadian hierarchy led by Taschereau, continued their opposition to the union. Despite pressure from Toronto's Irish Catholic business community that he support Taschereau, Lynch became a strong Gibbons supporter.

Lynch's decision had not come without some initial doubts. He too had publicly wondered about the Knight's oath. However, he had been visited in 1884 by Daniel J. O'Donoghue. A labor ally of Lynch's political partner Oliver Mowat and "Catholic to the core," O'Donoghue had convinced Lynch that the Knights of Labor presented no problem for the Church. Be assured, Lynch told O'Donoghue, "I have never, will not now, nor never will

condemn the honest efforts of working men and women to protect themselves against the often outrageous reactions of selfish tyrants and monopolitists." And while impressed by the reluctance of the Knights to use the strike weapon, the Archbishop also recognized that it was, in some instances, unavoidable such as "when arbitration failed owing to capital refusing to be a party." Lynch also indicated that his approval was not reserved for the Knights but included other groups such as the carpenters, the female shoe operators, the laborers, and the typographers.

Lynch's acceptance of the Knights was made doubly important because it was in marked contrast to the reaction of his French-Canadian colleagues who sided with Taschereau. Powderley himself travelled to Montreal, but he was unable to convince Bishop E. C. Fabré that the Knights were not intending to be destructive to the Catholic Church. O'Donoghue was equally unsuccessful with Ottawa prelate, Thomas Duhamel, although the two men had been childhood friends. Lynch, as their supporter, was considered by the Knights to be "great, good, and truly liberal as well as practical."

In the United States a similar schism had developed. The bishops of Portland and Saint Louis had followed Taschereau's lead and condemned the Knights. After Gibbons arranged an episcopal conference in Baltimore, however, a unanimous decision with which Lynch "was in most hearty accord" was made to oppose Taschereau. The Toronto press supported the Archbishop. The *Irish Canadian* praised him for being "more prudent" than the Quebec bishops. The *World* also praised him and ran a lengthy interview with Lynch in which he declared his sympathies were with laborers "who are not always paid sufficient for their work." The *Globe* similarly congratulated the Archbishop for his liberalism in allowing Catholics to join the Knights.²⁰

²⁰D. R. Kennedy, *The Knights of Labor In Canada* (London, 1949), p. 41; P.

Lynch was, in fact, being practical as well as idealistic as one historian has noted: "It was quite evident that neither the American nor the Ontario bishops were willing to coast conflict with an order to which so many Roman Catholics belonged." In a lengthy letter to Gibbons, Lynch declared his sympathy for the "workingmen who gained immense riches for . . . companies" and who were "kept in slaving wages not enough in a majority of cases to supply the natural wants of their families . . . Capital was organized for its own progress in wealth. Workingmen must then organize in self defence." However, the more pragmatic rationale was also evident. Lynch agreed that one of the reasons he did not wish to condemn the Knights was because the majority of them were Irishmen "obedient to the Church in a most remarkable degree." He equated the Knights with Irish guilds, noting only that the Knights followed a *less* stringent set of rules. He also suggested that Taschereau's ban would only aggravate the already serious problem of non-practice of religion among the Irish working class. It was wrong, he argued, to force a laborer to choose between his well being and his religion. The final decision on the status of the Knights,

Sylvain, "Les Chevaliers travail et le Cardinal Elzear — Alexandre Taschereau" in *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* (1973); Browne, pp. 109-181; J. T. Ellis, *The Life of James Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore*, 2 vols. (Mulwaukee, 1949), 1, 487-546; *Toronto Tribune*, 25 October, 1884; J. G. O'Donoghue, "Daniel J. O'Donoghue; Father of the Canadian Labour Movement," in *Canadian Catholic Historical Association, Report* (1942-1943), Doris French, *Faith, Sweat and Politics* (Toronto, 1962), *passim*; Archives, Catholic University of America, Terence V. Powderley Papers, D. O'Donoghue to T. V. Powderley, 27 October, 1884; 1 November, 1884; V.O. Chan, "The Knights of Labor with special reference to the 1880's," M.A. thesis, McGill University, 1949, p. 1611; Powderley Papers, O'Donoghue to Powderley, 24 January, 1886; Browne, pp. 142-143; Powderley Papers, O'Donoghue to Powderley, 21 June, 1885; Lynch Papers, Lynch to Gibbons, 23 March, 1886; *Irish Canadian*, 6 May, 1886; *World*, 30 April, 1886; *Globe*, 10 January, 1887; Kennedy, p. 86; A. A. T. Letterbook II, Lynch to Gibbons, 23 March, 1887; Archives of the Resurrectionist Providence, Father Louis Funcken Papers, Lynch to Funcken, 31 March, 1886; V. A. McClelland, *Cardinal Manning; His Public Life and Influence 1865-1892* (London, 1962), pp. 154-155; Lynch Papers, H. O. O'Brien to Lynch, n.d., 1887; Diocese of Peterborough Archives, Bishop Jamot Papers, Lynch Pastoral, 16 May, 1887; Lynch Papers, Bishop Walsh to Lynch, 4 March, 1887.

however, had to come from Rome. It came only after a concurrent visit by Taschereau and Gibbons. After a great deal of discussion with the two and the intercession of Cardinal Manning, the liberal British prelate, Papal authorities decided the Church had nothing to fear from the Knights. Taschereau was forced reluctantly to rescind the ban on membership. In Toronto, Lynch became a popular hero. He also issued a pastoral on labor relations which argued, "The competition between contractors and employees is keen because the gentlemen of the company want to get work done at too low a figure and hence the root and spring of all miseries." However, he also warned against "too radical a stance on the part of unions." "It is," he declared, "the will of God that there should be in this world various grades of society." Such sentiments were well received. The pastoral was described by episcopal colleague, John Walsh of London, as "not only most opportune, but simple, clear and convincing. If widely distributed, it could not fail to do us a great deal of good." It is notable, however, that, while Lynch certainly supported the theory of labor organization, he was apparently not willing to take the more radical step and intervene directly in labor disputes in which the majority of combatants were Catholics. The most obvious illustration of an occasion on which he might have chosen to intervene came in 1886. The Knights struck against the streetcar company owned by Lynch confidant Frank Smith. Although he later sided with the Knights, the Archbishop remained silent during the strike.²¹

²¹For an account of George's influence, see P. Rutherford, "Tomorrow's Metropolis: The Urban Reform Movement in Canada" in A. Artibise and G. Stelter, eds. *The Canadian City* (Toronto, 1977), p. 376; James Cardinal Gibbons, *La Question Des Ecrits de Henri George* (Rome, 1887), *passim*; *Evening Telegram*, 13 January, 1887; *Sentinel*, 17 May, 1888; F. Zwierlien, *Archbishop Corrigan* (Rochester, 1946), pp. 137-138; J. Rodechko, "An Irish American Journalist and Catholicism; Patrick Ford of the *Irish World*" in *Church History*, v. 39 (1970); *World* 1 March, 1887; *Tribune*, 4 March, 1887; Lynch Papers, Pastoral Letter, 6 January 1868; *World*, 9 May 1887.

Presumably it was also the radicalism of Henry George's Single Tax Movement which caused the Archbishop to oppose it. In this case, Lynch disagreed with Gibbons. Part of Lynch's condemnation centered on George's refusal to placate the Church which he regarded as one of the great enemies of the workingman. George also had a record of goading the Church. One of his principal disciples was Father McGlynn, a renegade priest, who had become involved in disputes with Archbishop Corrigan of New York and Bishop McQuaid of Rochester. As an ally of McQuaid and a Bishop who himself insisted on priestly obedience, Lynch could not countenance any organization which would harbor McGlynn. George was also supported by Patrick Ford, the editor of a renegade secular Irish newspaper. To Lynch, who had his own *bete noir* in the person of Patrick Boyle, the editor of the *Irish Canadian*, Ford was as unacceptable as McGlynn. To add to his distaste for George, the Single Taxer was invited to Toronto by the Orange Order. However, Lynch claimed his opposition was based primarily upon the radical societal changes proposed which, he claimed, were "against the common good and peace of society." Despite his concern for the poor, Lynch, reflecting the predominate contemporary point of view, refused to believe that radical change would ameliorate the problem. He warned:

The poor, however shiftless, would thus become rich but would soon again become poor through their extravagance and want of foresight and would be ready and clamorous as ever for a new division which the hardworking would scarcely like.

The statement was truly a reflection of the Archbishop's attitudes. Poverty was not to be solved. Social analysis was not yet acceptable. Within the confines of his philosophy, however, the Archbishop accomplished much. As one contemporary biographer noted of Lynch, "while

taking care of the spiritual needs of his flock, he has not been unmindful of the practical side of life.”²²



Oh, what a happiness to do what Jesus did! He came to evangelize the poor, and this is your lot and duty. Since our perfection is found in charity, there is no greater vocation than that of spending oneself to save souls and of wearing oneself out for them as Jesus Christ did.

St. Vincent de Paul

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²²J. C. Dent, *The Canadian Portrait Gallery* 4 vols. (Toronto, 1880), I, 145.

Keep continually before your eyes as your model the exemplary life of Jesus Christ which we are called upon to imitate not only as Christians, but because we have been chosen by God to serve Him in the person of the poor.

St. Louise de Marillac



I approve of the maxim to make use of all lawful and possible means for the glory of God as if God were not to help us, provided we expect everything from His Providence as if we had no human means.

St. Vincent de Paul



I wish that all be filled with a strong love which will occupy them so sweetly in God and so charitably in the service of the poor that their hearts may not admit any thoughts dangerous to their perseverance.

St. Louise de Marillac