

## **Archbishop John Joseph Lynch of Toronto: Twenty-eight Years of Commitment**

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John Joseph Lynch was Bishop/Archbishop of Toronto from 1860 to May 1888. During his twenty-eight year tenure, he accomplished much. A full examination of his life reveals a great deal about politics at both the federal and provincial levels. Lynch's charitable endeavours show the extent to which industrialization brought unprecedented change and unprecedented problems to Canadian society. A more particular examination of Lynch's career as an administrator and as a priest reveals that societal changes were, in many ways, reflected in the Church. Over a period of twenty-eight years, the episcopal office became progressively more complicated. During this time the relationship between priest and people was also altered as a gradual move towards secularization rendered it a more equitable relationship.<sup>1</sup>

John Joseph Lynch was born in 1816 in the townland of Annynonum in the Fermagh portion of Clones parish in County Monaghan, Ireland. It was a time of turmoil with Irish anger directed at Britain because of the tactics of Robert "Orange" Peel, his Royal Irish Constabulary, and the cyclical famines.<sup>2</sup> In comparative terms the Lynch family was well off. Both parents had been educated. John Joseph's father was a school teacher, closely involved with the nationalist movement through "the hedge schools." While not rich, the Lynch family was sufficiently independent that they could afford to move specifically to further their son's education. Their first move was made to allow John

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<sup>1</sup> For a complete study of Lynch, see Gerald J. Stortz "John Joseph Lynch, Archbishop of Toronto: a Biographical Study of Religious, Political and Social Commitment," Ph. D. Thesis, University of Guelph, 1980.

<sup>2</sup> For details of Peel's Irish career, see N. Gash, *Mr. Secretary Peel: The Life of Sir Robert Peel to 1830*. (London, 1961), pp. 96-237.

Joseph to attend a primary school run by a graduate of Dublin university. Upon completion he enrolled at Saint Joseph's Academy at Clondalkin. As an older student Lynch was required to teach catechism to younger children. Because he was a great success, Lynch's instructors encouraged him to enter the seminary. Several stories which circulated during his Toronto career indicated Lynch entered the seminary with an expressed desire to become a missionary to North America. The most common tale suggested that Lynch was inspired by a photograph of Niagara Falls and the *Jesuit Relations*. While the story is questionable it was not unusual for young men entering Holy Orders to enter the mission field. It was a wish which fitted Lynch's own philosophy, expressed often during his episcopacy that the Irish had a mandate to spread Catholicism throughout the world.

Lynch's theological education was a better than average one. After initial study at the Vincentian Seminary at Castle Knock, the candidate received further instruction at the Seminary of Saint-Lazare in Paris. He was admitted to Holy Orders in 1843 at Maynooth.<sup>3</sup>

Lynch's early priestly career was devoid of distinction or difficulty. Despite his missionary ambitions, Lynch was assigned to pastoral duties in Ireland. Three years after his ordination, John Odin, a Vincentian bishop working in Texas, visited Ireland to recruit priests. Lynch was accepted reluctantly as Odin opined, "Mr. Lynch ranks by no means among the brightest ornaments of the Vincentian missions."<sup>4</sup>

Lynch's initial record in Texas seemed to substantiate Odin's doubt. Both he and another priest were stationed in Galveston, separate from the main community and were subject to feelings of isolation and depression. These misgivings were, however, soon replaced by enthusiasm as Lynch became a familiar figure in the Galveston area as a "circuit rider". The pace he set for himself soon affected Lynch's health and he was ordered to Louisiana to rest. Typically, rather than do so, the young priest found a new project

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<sup>3</sup> Archives, Niagara University, Archbishop Lynch File, E. Conlin to Reverend Maguire, December 14, 1938; J. D. Murphy, *Archbishop Lynch CM.: Founder of Niagara University and Seminary of Our Lady of the Angels*. (Lewiston, 1939), p. 1; W. Donegan, *Lancania* (n.p., n.d.), pp. 1-2.

<sup>4</sup> Bishop Odin to Vicar-General Etienne, April 8, 1846, in R. Bayard, *Lone Star Vanguard: the Catholic Reoccupation of Texas (1838-1848)*. (Saint Louis, 1945), p. 370.

acting as chaplain to soldiers returning from Mexico. From them, Lynch contracted malaria. To combat the effects, he was ordered to a cooler climate.

In 1848, a transfer came to Saint Mary of the Barrens in Missouri. By 1849, Father Lynch was Rector. His success in recruiting young Irish priests for North America led to a further appointment as advisor to the Vincentian Superior General. As such he travelled to Ireland, France and Rome as well as throughout North America. By 1857, Lynch's reputation caused fellow Vincentian, Bishop John Timon of Buffalo to ask him to come to New York to found a seminary. Despite Timon's interference and the extreme poverty of the area Lynch was able to establish the Seminary of Our Lady of Angels at Suspension Bridge (now Niagara University at Lewiston). As administrator Lynch became a legendary figure. For example, just as the financial crisis reached the desperation stage, Lynch received a ten thousand dollar bequest from a Brooklyn priest. While the characterization of this event by some historians as a near-miracle does seem to be an overreaction, it was one of many such stories which enhanced Lynch's reputation. Less questionable are the stories of Father Lynch's charitable endeavours including stories in which the priest literally gave away the shirt from his back. One oft repeated story centres upon an overcoat of very large size which Lynch and another priest had to share during a typically harsh Niagara frontier winter because he had given away all the other winter clothing.<sup>5</sup>

Whether or not these stories were literally true, Lynch had by the 1850s developed a reputation for administrative ability and charity. The stories were carried to the Vincentian Superior in Paris, Thomas McNamara. He, in turn, told them to Comte Armand de Charbonnel, Bishop of Toronto who was visiting his homeland. Charbonnel, impressed, decided to seek out Lynch on his return to Canada with the idea that the New York priest might be made auxiliary bishop with the right of succession. After meeting Lynch, Charbonnel asked the Vatican to make such an appointment. John Joseph Lynch was consecrated at Saint Michael's Cathedral in September 1859. In early 1860 Charbonnel retired and Lynch became Toronto's third bishop. Ten years later,

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<sup>5</sup> Lynch to Etienne, Septembre 2, 1847 in *ibid.*, p. 386; Murphy, p. 11; Niagara University, *That All May Know Thee, 1856, One Hundred Years - 1956* (Philadelphia, 1956), p. 1; W. Donegan, *Lancanra* (n.p., n.d.), pp. 2-3.

while attending the Vatican Council, as a reward for a stalwart defence of infallibility, he became the first Archbishop of Toronto.

Lynch had a vast amount of territory to administer. Although the diocese had been subdivided four years earlier with the erection of London and Hamilton, the territory stretched from Newcastle in the east to Brampton in the west and as far north as Georgian Bay. The archdiocese was further subdivided in 1874 when the Vicariate Apostolic of Northern Ontario was formed which became Peterborough diocese in 1881. The archepiscopal territory also shrunk in 1886 when after a prolonged and bitter fight Lynch was forced to cede part of the Kingston territory to Archbishop Thomas Duhamel of Ottawa but this was largely offset by the development of the north. Expansion during Lynch's reign was also apparent in many other ways. In 1860 for example 14,708 students attended 115 separate schools in the province. By 1890 largely due to Lynch's efforts, the system had expanded to 259 schools serving 34,571 children. Parish churches increased by 40 and Lynch not only expanded the existing charitable constitutions but founded three new ones to deal with the problems produced by industrialization and urbanization. These were the Notre Dame Institute to help country girls who had migrated to the city to work in shops or attend Normal School; the Magdalen Asylum, a refuge for girls who had become involved in such activities as prostitution and the Saint Nicholas Home, a haven for the numerous "street urchins," children abandoned by their parents euphemistically referred to as newsboys.<sup>6</sup>

That Lynch was as successful as he was is all the more remarkable because Toronto provided an environment hostile to any expansion of Catholicism. "The Belfast of Canada," as Toronto was known, was the strongest centre outside the British Isles of the Orange Order, and Irish based fraternal organization with a stated policy of anti-Catholicism.<sup>7</sup> Within Toronto, ultra-Protestants ruled, a situation reinforced in the later years of Lynch's reign by a massive influx of Protestant immigrants. The result was that, despite an increase in the actual number of Catholics

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<sup>6</sup> T. W. Anglin, "The Life and Times of the Most Rev. John Joseph Lynch." J. R. Teefy, ed. *Jubilee Volume; Archdiocese of Toronto*. (Toronto, 1892), pp. 172-173.

<sup>7</sup> See C. J. Houston and W. J. Smyth, *The Sash Canada Wore: An Historical Geography of the Orange Order in Canada*. (Toronto, 1980), *passim*.

in Toronto, the percentage of the population they represented actually declined between 1860 and 1890. (see chart below)

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Irish Catholics in the City of Toronto 1860-1890.

<b>Year</b>	<b>City Population</b>	<b>Catholics</b>	<b>Irish</b>	<b>Cath. % of Popul'n</b>
1860	44,821	12,125	12,441	27
1870	56,092	11,881	10,336	21
1880	86,415	15,716	—	18
1890	144,023	21,830	13,347	15

*Sources:* P. Goheen, *Victorian Toronto 1850-1900: Pattern and Process of Growth* (Chicago, 1970), pp. 65-66, 75-76; H. A. Scott, "The Roman Catholic Church East of the Great Lakes." A. G. Doughty and A. Shorts, *Canada and Its Provinces*. 20 vols. (Toronto, 1914), 11, 61-63; Census of 1891.

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This was also the "age of iron and steam" which marked "the rise of Toronto" which established the city "as the capital of a great metropolitan economic empire." The era was marked also by cyclical depressions. Particularly between 1875 and 1880 hardship struck nearly everyone but hurt especially the Irish Catholic segment of the population, the majority of whom were unskilled laborers. Unlike their rural counterparts, the urban Irish in Toronto, as elsewhere in North America, were groups in identifiable areas, west of the mouth of the Don River, at King and Yonge Streets and on Dufferin Street between College and Bloor.<sup>8</sup> Lynch was concerned with the fate of those who lived in these areas. He fought for their economic and political interests recognizing that living in unsuitable conditions often led to deterioration of a man's spirituality as well as deterioration of his body. To this end he attempted to instill pride in the Irish religion and to defend both his religion and his nationality against attacks from the Protestant majority. The desire to do so affected Lynch's attitudes towards the majority, his clergy and members of the laity.

One of the most effective methods Lynch used was public appearances. Throughout his career, despite bouts of ill health,

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<sup>8</sup> P. Goheen, *Victorian Toronto 1850-1890; Pattern and Process of Growth*. (Chicago, 1970), pp. 65-66, 75-76; D. C. Masters, *The Rise of Toronto 1850-1900*. (Toronto, 1947), p. 165.

Lynch's public activity dramatically increased. In 1862, for example, in July, one of the busiest months, Lynch listed fourteen public appearances. By June 1886 no less than twenty-three days were taken up by such activities.<sup>9</sup>

In his approach to the administration of his diocese, Lynch was modernistic in his thinking. During his reign, each parish was required to provide the Chancery office with a complete set of vital statistics each year. Such matters as finances, the number of penitents and Easter communicants were recorded. When sent to Toronto, these statistics were compiled on a master sheet which was sent to Rome. With such complete records, it was relatively easy for Lynch and his subordinates to make decisions regarding the parishes in the Archdiocese on the basis of complete and accurate information.<sup>10</sup> Partly because his health was often poor, but also because the work load became progressively greater, Lynch was not reluctant to delegate authority. He showed some ability in assessing individual character and talent. Such men as John Walsh, P.D. Laurent, John Francis Jamot and J.F. McBride worked diligently and loyally towards the ends Lynch desired. Some indication of the attitude Lynch had towards his subordinates is indicated by his choice of two of them, Walsh and Jamot for bishoprics during his twenty-eight year reign.

In contrast to his administrative techniques, Lynch's religious views were extremely conservative. His public insistence on the legitimacy of such views was often the source of attacks upon Lynch by Toronto's Protestant press and clergy. Lynch's conservatism, however, fit into what historians have recognized as a religious revival in Ireland, which was continued and intensified by the process of immigration and the resulting added importance of group identity.<sup>11</sup>

Lynch's outspoken devotion to Our Lady of Knock was conservative in the sense that it was akin to medieval concepts of

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<sup>9</sup> *Canadian Freeman*, January 9, 1862; Archives, Archdiocese of Toronto, Archbishop Lynch Papers, Archbishop Lynch to Rev. C. O'Reilly, June 6, 1886.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, Survey Results, 1875.

<sup>11</sup> For the Irish aspect see E.E. Larkin, "The Devotional Revolution in Ireland 1850-1855" *American Historical Review* v. 77, (1972) pp. 625-652; the immigration process is examined in T. L. Smith, "Religion and Ethnicity in America." *American Historical Review* v. 83 (1978), pp. 1155-1185.

Catholicism. This was an Irish shrine on a site which the Blessed Virgin, Saint Joseph and Saint John the Evangelist were said to have appeared to three women. Although the shrine was not sanctioned by the Church during Lynch's lifetime, it was a place of special devotion and there are many tales of cures effected by the application of plaster from the walls of the shrine to diseased parts of the body. Among the most enthusiastic of those who claimed to have been cured by the plaster was Archbishop Lynch. After the initial visit in 1879, he made many more pilgrimages to Knock. He testified to Vatican authorities that he had indeed been cured of gout by the plaster. In gratitude, the Catholics of the archdiocese donated an elaborate banner of thanksgiving. While this was the most spectacular manifestation of Lynch's penchant for Marian devotion, there were other less controversial examples. Lynch, for example, joined with Montreal Bishop Ignace Bourget in promoting acceptance of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. Lynch also encouraged Marian devotion throughout the archdiocese.<sup>12</sup>

Lynch believed that an Irish Catholic bishop in a predominantly Protestant milieu had a duty as leader of the Irish Catholic minority to make the views of his people and his faith well known. This not only was a means of avoiding misunderstanding, it also was a way in which Lynch could affirm his role as a spokesman for Irish Catholicism in Toronto. To these ends, Lynch regularly delivered Sunday evening lectures at Saint Michael's Cathedral. The events were regarded by patrons as entertainment as well as information sessions. A twenty-five cent admission was charged, the proceeds going to Catholic charitable groups.

That Lynch was unusual in his singular devotion to this task was indicated by the Bishop of Hamilton who, in the 1870s, expressed surprise that the Toronto prelate could deliver so many lectures and issue so many pastorals and still maintain a constant pace in his day to day activity. Lynch apparently was given the energy to perform the extra work by his enthusiasm for the result. He wrote to one correspondent, "I am delivering lectures every Sunday evening at the Cathedral to immense audiences, the one third of whom are Protestants and what is better than secular newspapers having a

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<sup>12</sup> *Toronto Star*, September 22, 1879; University of Notre Dame Archives, Brother Justinian to Rev. D.E. Hudson, September 25, 1887; L.K. Shook "Marian Pilgrimages of the Archdiocese of Toronto," Canadian Catholic Historical Association, *Study Sessions* (1953), pp. 53-65.

circulation of about fifty thousand a day publish a synopsis of them every Monday morning.” The Archbishop’s description of the audiences as immense was apparently not inaccurate. For one of Lynch’s lectures in 1883, the audience was estimated at five thousand people. Occasionally, the lecture texts would also be published in pamphlet form for distribution. One such pamphlet utilized the text of a series of Lynch lectures to answer, for Protestants, one hundred questions about Catholicism.<sup>13</sup>

The lectures themselves were of two kinds – those which provided information about certain aspects of Catholicism and those which responded to specific attacks upon the Faith. The former had titles such as “The Alleged Doctrine and True Faith of the Catholic Church,” “The Unity of the Church” or dealt with particular Sacraments such as Baptism, Penance and Extreme Unction. The latter type of lecture was concerned with specific comments which had been made in the city about Catholicism. In 1874, Protestant groups distributed a pamphlet, *The Gospel in the Vatican*, which was alleged to be a translation of a speech delivered at the Vatican Council by Bishop Strossmeyer, a noted European theologian in which he refuted the doctrine of Papal infallibility. On the copy of the work in the Lynch Papers, the Archbishop noted, “The Bp. delivered no such speech. John Joseph Lynch, Abp. of Toronto, present at the Council.” In a lecture delivered after the distribution of the pamphlet, Lynch publicly denied that Strossmeyer had made the statement.<sup>14</sup>

Both types of lectures often embroiled Lynch in disputes of a public nature with Protestant spokesmen. In 1874, for example, in a lecture described by the *Irish Canadian* as “calm and dignified... none the less cautious and severe,” Lynch responded to charges by Goldwin Smith that separate schools were unnecessary. In 1875, Bishop Sweatman, the Anglican Bishop of Toronto, found in Lynch a ready target. The Archbishop became the villain in a Sweatman lecture on the Reformation. This began a long feud between the two men. Lynch’s bitterest attack upon Sweatman came in 1879. The Anglican criticized Catholic veneration of saints as idol worship.

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<sup>13</sup> Lynch Papers, Ticket to Lecture, May 1873; Bishop Farrell to Lynch, March 15, 1875, April 3, 1875; Lynch to unidentified, n.d.; *Irish Canadian* November 25, 1874; *Globe*, March 29, 1881.

<sup>14</sup> *Irish Canadian*, November 25, 1874; Lynch Papers, *The Gospel in the Vatican*, (n.p., 1874); *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*, December 25, 1874.

Lynch replied:

We pity the simplicity of our deceived Protestant brethren and pardon their erroneous opinions of the Catholic Church when they are fed on such literature but it is hard to pardon people of judgment who are supposed to read both sides of a question.<sup>15</sup>

Lynch himself encouraged such disputes to some extent by his actions. Early in 1886, for example, Lynch published a letter in the *Irish Canadian* in which he accused Protestant leaders of generally being misinformed regarding the nature of Catholicism. John Curry, a Protestant, objected to Lynch's tendency, as demonstrated in the letter, of dictating to Protestants. John Lains, another non-Catholic clergyman, charged that although Lynch claimed all Protestants were not automatically doomed, *Butler's Catechism*, a work approved for use in Ontario's separate schools, said they were. While such controversies did little to convince Protestants of the validity of Catholic claims, as espoused by Lynch, they did serve a positive purpose. By assuming such a high profile, Lynch reinforced the image of the Archbishop as champion of Catholic rights and as an Irish Catholic leader.<sup>16</sup>

The Archbishop also had to deal with former Catholic priests and those who claimed to be former priests such as Charles Chiniquy, an apostate who had been a parish priest in Montreal. Throughout the 1870s and 1880s the Catholic Church in general and Lynch in particular were the constant targets of his attacks. In contrast with such renegades, the Archbishop's relations with priests who did not stray were actually quite good. In comparison with his predecessors such as Bishop Macdonell or his colleagues in Quebec, Lynch had few problems. However, the Archbishop was dissatisfied with the quality of priests with whom he had to deal. In 1865, for example, Lynch complained to Vatican officials that fellow Bishops were not being totally honest in their appraisal of priests who requested an *exeat* to come to Toronto. This, complained the Toronto Bishop, meant he unwittingly accepted priests who proved to be problems. In 1870 Lynch reiterated his

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<sup>15</sup> *Irish Canadian*, August 25, 1874; *Toronto Tribune*, January 14, 1875, June 27, 1879.

<sup>16</sup> *Irish Canadian*, February 11, 1886; *Toronto Mail*, February 9, 1886, April 13, 1886.

argument. He commiserated with Bishop Horan of Kingston,

I am not ignorant of the troubles which a bad priest gives a good Bishop and of the justification they often make contrary to the facts. The more guilty they are, the more they proclaim their innocence.

By 1876 Lynch was refusing to accept priests who wished to leave other dioceses and their Orders for stations in the Toronto area. As the Bishop informed a Carmelite Father who wished to work in the archdiocese:

I have had experience of these doubtful characters. Unfortunately people apply to be received into religious communities to be in a place of safety from their own weakness but their failings being inherent are often uncorrected, they carry disorder and disappointment into those religious communities and give scandal to the people because they are generally employed in exterior ministry; thus the religious often suffer in reputation.<sup>17</sup>

Despite Lynch's expressed caution, the problems he feared did not cease. In 1883, Lynch advised Archbishop Gibbons of Baltimore that it was unfortunate that "for the past number of years... some bishops have considered it a wiser thing to tolerate priests who are not doing their duty to God nor the people than correct them." This was aided, argued Lynch, by a growing tendency on the part of the *Curia* to take the side of a priest. This he called "Roman malaria" which was "one of the causes which act for the destruction of souls." Tolerance of such priests was injurious, according to Lynch, because "Our simple and chaste Irish people are too often scandalized and their children born in this country will simply desert the Church." Lynch recounted the case of a Toronto priest (Father Gribbins) who, found guilty of paternity, travelled to Rome and hired the Pope's lawyer to defend him successfully against the charges brought against him by Lynch. The Prefect of Propaganda, Cardinal Simeoni, rebuked Lynch for bringing charges against Gribbins which were unsubstantiated. Lynch, however, retained his bitterness toward the Vatican and claimed that Gribbins

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<sup>17</sup> Archives, Archdiocese of Kingston, Bishop Horan Papers, Lynch to Bishop Horan, September 26, 1870.

had used false evidence against him.<sup>18</sup>

Lynch voiced similar complaints in 1875 regarding a priest (Father O'Reilly) who had received his *exeat* from the Archdiocese of Cincinnati to work in Toronto. Lynch admitted that he had given O'Reilly too much latitude. O'Reilly's conduct was not to Lynch's liking but he was reluctant to "let him loose here or in the States." Still, argued Lynch, "I do not like to have near me a priest who would not be contented." Rather than attempt to deal with him, Lynch transferred O'Reilly back to Ireland.<sup>19</sup>

In reality most of the problems faced by priests under Lynch's administration were minor in both number and degree. Most matters certainly did not involve Vatican officials. The most serious problem presented to the Archbishop by most of his subordinates during his tenure involved the interpretation of doctrine and the enforcement of Church regulations. Typical of such situations was that in 1867 in which Father O'Connor, a priest in the Niagara area, asked Lynch whether he might dispense with the bans for a couple in his parish. The request was made because the bride-to-be was in domestic service and did not want her employer to know, any sooner than necessary, that she would be leaving. Other unusual decisions for Lynch to make were whether or not women should be allowed to perform the altar boys' functions at daily Mass, in a parish in which no males attended on the weekdays. Most requests, however, were of a more mundane nature, such as a permission to perform mixed marriages.<sup>20</sup>

The most serious local problems with priests with which Lynch had to deal were financial misconduct and excessive drinking. It is not surprising that the latter was a problem. Consumption of alcohol was one of the common problems throughout nineteenth century society. Lynch was much stricter with priests than in his attitudes toward the laity. All priests were expected to pledge themselves to a period of abstinence upon ordination. And while Lynch countenanced the use of wine and beer by the laity, even

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<sup>18</sup> Archives, Archdiocese of Baltimore, Cardinal Gibbons Papers, Lynch to Archbishop Gibbons, September 3, 1883; Archives of the Sacred Congregation, Cardinal Simeoni to Lynch, May 16, 1883, Lynch to Simeoni, September, 1884.

<sup>19</sup> Archives, University of Notre Dame, Lynch to Archbishop Purcell, January 18, 1875.

<sup>20</sup> Lynch Papers, Rev. O'Connor to Lynch, August 29, 1867; Rev. McRae to Rev. J.F. McBride, April 27, 1888.

rumours of such behaviour by priests led to disciplinary action by the Archbishop.<sup>21</sup>

Financial maladministration was an even more common problem. While there is no doubt that such problems did exist, allegations of dishonesty were often used as weapons in personal feuds between two priests. For example, in 1887, Father Allain of Port Perry was accused by his successor of stealing money with which to pay a personal debt to a savings and loan company. According to the new curate, Father Keane, Allain then attempted to intimidate the parishioners in Port Perry into giving extra to cover up his behaviour. This, argued Keane, was not only immoral, but had become a source of embarrassment as the Methodist minister in Uxbridge, Allain's new parish, had heard of the matter. Lynch undoubtedly agreed with the assessment of another priest who criticized Allain. Father Egan of Thornhill argued:

Transactions like these give to people who are willing to use such an opportunity of calling into question the honesty of priests in dealing with money matters.

True of Egan's prediction, the *Mail* seized upon the Allain matter to criticize the quality of Catholic priests under Lynch. The *Mail* argued, "The men who are actually not allowed to remain even as curates in any other place seem to thrive and flourish under His Grace's Wing." In fairness to Lynch, there was little he could do. In the case of two priests accused of pocketing the proceeds from a parish picnic, Lynch appointed Reverend R. A. O'Connor, Dean of Barrie, to investigate. After determining the guilt of the two, the most suitable punishment Lynch was able to impose was to send them to Guelph to a retreat house run by the Jesuits. In other cases, certain trusted priests, particularly Father Francis McSpiritt, a noted faith healer, were assigned to oversee the rehabilitation of errant and alcoholic priests.<sup>22</sup>

Lynch made several attempts to overcome the problem of renegade priests. The Archbishop reasoned that since the vast majority of priests who were causing him trouble came from outside

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<sup>21</sup> H. C. McKeown, *The Life and Labors of the Most Rev. John Joseph Lynch*. (Toronto, 1886), pp. 261-267; see for example, Lynch Papers, Lynch to Rev. Browning, April 31, [sic] 1888.

<sup>22</sup> Lynch Papers, Rev. P. F. Keane to Lynch, December 17, 1887; Rev. I. Egan to Lynch, March 5, 1888; Dean R. A. O'Connor to Lynch, January 18, 1887.

the archdiocese, he would be able to reduce his difficulties by educating his own priests. There were several grades of priestly education offered. Certain seminarians were given the opportunity to study in the classical seminaries of Rome and Genoa. Lynch, however, became perturbed that there were no seminaries for English Canadians to attend. This problem was overcome in two ways. Students were sent for their final training to the seminaries in Quebec City and Montreal. Minor seminaries were established at Saint Agatha, and Adjala, near Barrie. Although the Adjala operation was a failure, the Saint Agatha operation which ultimately was moved to Waterloo, proved extremely successful. Under the direction of Father Louis Funcken, the seminary was by 1879 producing sufficient numbers of strong candidates for the priesthood to be considered a success by the Archbishop. By 1882, the archbishop was in the unusual and enviable position of having a surplus of priests. By the end of Lynch's reign, the programs had proven so successful that some Toronto parishes were staffed by priests who were not only natives of the city, but had attended the particular parish church and school as children.<sup>23</sup>

Archbishop Lynch's relationship with priests who belonged to congregations and were therefore outside his direct control indicates that he did believe in strict obedience. In particular, there was an ongoing dispute between Lynch and members of the Basilian Order over the operation of Saint Michael's College. As one author has stated, Lynch's advice "looked like a campaign of harassment and interference." In 1863 Father Soulerin, the Superior, complained "His Excellency has decided to humiliate us" after Lynch announced publicly that the Basilian was incompetent.

Soulerin's successor as Basilian Superior-General faced even greater problems when a feud erupted between Lynch and Father Michael Ferguson, a young priest. The dispute, however, revolved around several other issues – the refusal of Lynch to ordain Basilians, the Order's refusal to assist the Archbishop in the mission seminary at Adjala and the use of "spies" by Lynch on the college. Why Ferguson was personally attacked is not clear. He had, however, earlier criticized Lynch for his extreme Irish nationalist views, and his blatant involvement in politics. Ferguson was as well

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<sup>23</sup> A. S. C., Lynch to Cardinal Bamabo, October 25, 1868; Archives, Resurrectionist Province, Father Louis Funcken Papers, Father L. Funcken to Lynch, May 26, 1881, September 25, 1882.

known an orator as Lynch, and it is possible certain professional jealousies also clouded the issue.<sup>24</sup>

In 1872 Lynch wrote to both Father Vincent and the Vatican asking that Ferguson be removed from Toronto. He did not elaborate upon the reason, commenting only “You [Vincent] are sufficiently aware of my reasons.” Vincent sent a reply to both Lynch and Rome which asked for a specific cause for the Archbishop’s dissatisfaction. In his reply to Vincent, Lynch said “it was the evil that was done at St. Michael’s College which had prompted the request.” The letter to Rome sent the same day, however, was typically vague and complained only that Ferguson had interfered in nonreligious matters. Lynch did explain the troubles in the College a few days later when he complained that College students were womanizing and drinking, yet had not been subjected to corporal punishment. An appeal to Rome by Ferguson did no good and he was banished to Assumption College in Sandwich. This was, however, only the most serious in a series of incidents in which Lynch and the Basilians found themselves at odds.<sup>25</sup>

Obedience from the laity as well as the clergy was what Lynch expected. The Archbishop believed that “Catholics who attend their religious duties are always generous to the Church and give neither the Bishops nor the pastors trouble but on the contrary consolation.” Lynch was particularly sensitive about the behaviour of Catholic laymen because of the reaction of Toronto’s predominantly Protestant population. In 1865, for example, he commented, “In Toronto, we are still in combat with bigotry, pride, poverty and orangism [sic].” Lynch also recognized that not only Protestants but Catholics could be turned away from the Church by rumours of scandal. It is entirely possible, however, that Lynch was equally concerned with the personal aspersion which could be cast upon himself. In 1884, for example, Lynch informed a fellow Bishop, with pleasure, “Protestant ascendancy is pretty well down in Toronto. The Catholic Archbishop ranks first after the

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<sup>24</sup> J. Hanrahan *The Basilian Fathers 1822-1972* (Toronto, 1973), pp. 69-71; R. J. Scollard, *The Dictionary of Basilian Biography* (Toronto, 1969), pp. 53-54.

<sup>25</sup> Archives, University of Saint Michael’s College, Father Vincent to Father Soulerin, July 4, 1872, June 29, 1872; Lynch to Vincent, July 7, 1872, Septembre 4, 1872; Hanrahan, p. 73.

Governor or Representative of Her Majesty here.<sup>26</sup>

Lynch's most important duty in regard to the laity was to act as their spiritual director. In late Victorian Canada, this entailed much more than simply performing administrative tasks – it involved also the policing of ritual. In particular, Lynch was concerned about the increasingly elaborate funeral customs of Toronto's Irish Catholics. In one of his Sunday evening lectures, Lynch commented,

We trust that the clergy of all denominations and newspapers of all shades of politics will re-echo the voice of reason and humanity that seek thus to put down a foolish custom.

The funerals, said Lynch, were “nothing but theatrical grief and sham mourning.”<sup>27</sup>

Another common service performed by Lynch was to arbitrate disputes between laymen and priests. A great many of these centred upon the payment of pew rents in rural parishes. In 1884, in one case, a parishioner complained that when he and his daughter arrived for Sunday Mass, their pew was blocked by a rope. When he attempted to sit in the seat, Father Egan physically removed him from the Church. While these were minor matters, usually easily resolved, pastors sometimes caused great grief to the laity. Father McGinley, the pastor of the Mission at Schomberg refused to say a Requiem Mass for John Kane, upon his death, despite claims by his daughter that the fee for the Mass had been paid in advance.<sup>28</sup>

Only occasionally did such disputes present a serious problem for Lynch. In one such case McGinley was visiting the parish in Orillia. He rebuked the daughter of Thomas Mulcahy, a prominent layman, for laughing in Church. Mulcahy's daughter claimed that she had a cold, and had simply coughed. An angry Mulcahy wrote to Lynch, complaining of the incident and of the general treatment of the laity by the Orillia priests. Mulcahy threatened to withdraw his support for the town's separate schools if the matter was not

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<sup>26</sup> Lynch Papers, Lynch to L. A. H. Allan, March 11, 1884; Archives of Diocese of Saint Hyacinthe, Bishop Moreau Papers, Lynch to Rector, Grand Seminary of Montreal, December 19, 1865; Gibbons Papers, Lynch to Gibbons, September 3, 1883, September 15, 1884.

<sup>27</sup> *Tribune*, March 30, 1876.

<sup>28</sup> Lynch Papers, Unidentified to Lynch, November 19, 1884; Rev. J. McGinley to Lynch, December 28, 1887.

settled to his satisfaction. Father O'Connor was dispatched to investigate. Upon his report, Lynch addressed an apology to Mulcahy which Father Campbell, the Orillia pastor, was ordered to read aloud to his congregation.<sup>29</sup>

All was not sweetness and light between Lynch and the laity. From 1876 to his death in 1888, the Archbishop gradually lost control of his flock. This was particularly noticeable in a series of attacks emanating from the city's Separate School Board. In 1876 Regius Elmsley accused the Archbishop of mishandling the school funds. While nothing immediately came of the accusations as Lynch was able to quiet the controversy, Elmsley's charges marked the beginning of a long-term dispute between the Archbishop and lay forces in which the secular group was ultimately victorious. It also heralded a concerted anti-Lynch campaign by Toronto's ultra-Protestant press. While the opening salvos were fired by the *Evening Telegram*, the cause was ultimately taken up by the *Mail* and culminated in the well-known, "No Popery" political campaigns of the late 1880s. Lynch reacted immediately to the threat by refusing to allow absolution to be granted to Elmsley after a bitterly fought 1879 School Board contest in which Lynch's administrative abilities were a central issue.<sup>30</sup> The real struggle between Lynch and the laity came with the fight over the introduction of the ballot in Separate School Board elections.

The controversy began in 1874 when a Conservative member of the Ontario legislature introduced a bill which would have sanctioned the use of the ballot in such elections. In his speeches supporting the bill and subsequent versions in 1882 and 1883, Bell, and Orangeman, focussed his attacks upon Archbishop Lynch.<sup>31</sup> It was, however, not until 1887 that the Catholic laity of Toronto became involved in a head-to-head confrontation with the Archbishop. Lynch won the battle but lost the war! In 1887, he was able to thwart those who wished the introduction of the ballot and within a few months of his death the reforms which the Archbishop's foes had sought, including the ballot, were in place. In

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, T. Mulcahy to Lynch, January 24, 1887; Dean R.A. O'Connor to Lynch, January 12, 1887; Lynch to Mulcahy, January 14, 1887.

<sup>30</sup> Archives of Ontario, Toronto Separate School Board Papers, R. Elmsley to Lynch, March 16, 1876; F. Walker, *Catholic Education and Politics in Ontario* (Toronto, 1955), p. 55.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

the controversy, Lynch's tactics and attitudes revealed much about his views on political direction and Irish nationalism. The dispute over the ballot, however, is also a prime example of the gradual loss of control being experienced by the Archbishop. The desire of Catholic laymen for greater freedom and less clerical direction was a phenomenon that Lynch did not understand, for he continued to cling throughout his life to the conception of the role of the clergy which he had learned in Ireland in the early part of the century. Because he did not understand the process of secularization, Lynch was powerless to stop it. This was a tactical problem which affected virtually every aspect of the prelate's career.

The initial dispute was fired by the presentation of a goldheaded cane to Father M.N. O'Reilly, one of Lynch's problem priests, by Irish nationalists for his work on their behalf in his School Board duties. Lynch ordered the cane returned because it symbolized not only Father O'Reilly's disobedience in the face of an edict from Lynch that the School Board not be used as a nationalist forum, but the willingness of the laymen in the nationalist organization to share in and show approval of O'Reilly's insubordination. In reprisal, Lynch personally selected candidates for the School Board 1887 election who shared his views. Although they were elected, the weakness of the Archbishop's position was illustrated when the pro-clerical forces were unable to unseat the nationalists from positions of power at the early 1888 Board meetings. At the first meeting, the nationalists introduced a resolution which charged that unwarranted interference in Board elections indicated there was a continuing need for the introduction of the ballot.<sup>32</sup>

Lynch's anger was undoubtedly heightened by the adoption of the pro-ballot position by Toronto's ultra-Protestant newspapers, all of which supported the Conservative party. The *Mail*, in particular, took the opportunity to portray Lynch as a dictatorial individual. The newspaper editorialized, "His Grace condemns secret voting in Canada. He approves of it in Ireland where tyrannical landlords exist although strange to say, he has apparently never heard of tyrannical priests." In adopting a conservative stance on the question, Lynch gave ammunition to the opposition. When a School Board by-election was held, Lynch steadfastly refused to countenance the ballot. The Archbishop declared:

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<sup>32</sup> Lynch Papers, Lynch to Father O'Reilly, September 18, 1887; Walker, p. 65; *Irish Canadian*, February 19, 1888.

I entirely disapprove of secret balloting... it is a great, great incongruity that a free man should hide a vote. I am astonished the ballot was introduced into Canada inasmuch as it is an open acknowledgement that people are not free to act openly in their private convictions.<sup>33</sup>

Lynch chose one candidate in the by-election to oppose the pro-ballot forces, then replaced him with T. W. Anglin, a former federal politician and a trusted advisor. Such blatant interference was condemned by Toronto's press. The *Telegram* condemned Anglin as "a professional Catholic." The *Globe* described him as "an impulsive gentleman saturated with the opinion that a bishop should rule his flock in secular affairs." When the Hierarchical candidate won after the issuance of a pastoral by Lynch, the *Telegram* declared, "It was not a great victory for Anglin." Other members of the Hierarchy were jubilant. Bishop McIntyre of Charlottetown termed the victory over ballot forces a triumph over "unreasonable insane and unjust opposition." In realistic terms Lynch had won a pyrrhic victory. How strong the feeling against the Archbishop was in the campaign is impossible to determine, but the provincial Liberal party was warned that to side with Lynch in this instance would lead to the loss of electoral support for the Liberals among Catholics. While the victory satisfied Lynch, it was of little consequence as within a few weeks the Archbishop was dead. Within four years, the changes in School Board elections which Lynch fought so vehemently, were in place as the ballot was approved.<sup>34</sup>

The ballot question is of greater significance than simply as a political event. The ultimate victory of the predominantly lay pro-ballot forces over the anti-ballot forces provides a minor example of the changes taking place within the Irish-Canadian community during Lynch's reign. There was a progressive trend away from clerical control. The role of priests and the function of religion changed. As one observer of nineteenth century Ireland has noted,

Whereas pre-famine Irish peasant religion had functioned to help its participants deal with the old source of stress, the threat of starvation, its post-famine counterpart functioned to help them deal with the new

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<sup>33</sup> *Mail*, February 7, 1888; Lynch Papers, Lynch to All Priests, February 18, 1888.

<sup>34</sup> *Telegram*, April 14, 1888; *Globe*, April 19, 1888, April 25, 1888; Lynch Papers, Bishop McIntyre to Lynch, April, 1888.

source of stress, the threat of rootlessness.<sup>35</sup>

While the Church provided stability, leadership and guidance, it also tended to isolate Catholics. Stephan Thernstrom, for example, has argued that the Catholic Church erected “structural fences... contrived to keep the ethnic individual articulated to the church and the community while keeping him from straying too far out into the community social system.”<sup>36</sup> As Church leader, Lynch followed this pattern in establishing a comprehensive network of charities to benefit Toronto’s Irish Catholics. He had two motivations in ensuring the existence of Catholic charities. One was his sincere concern for the welfare of his flock; the other was that suggested by Thernstrom, to prevent incursion among Catholics by Protestant sects and to encourage what was an observable enthusiasm and religious fervour among those who had come to North America from Ireland. While the charities were a qualified success in that they did slow the rate of “seepage,” they were not enough to still the trend toward secularization taking place within the Irish Catholic community. There was, in Toronto as elsewhere in North America, a change in the role expected of the Hierarchy. In politics, in nationalist societies and in other facets of immigrant life, leadership was assumed by laymen. These were fields which were traditionally those influenced by priests and bishops. It is even arguable that the Toronto laity were in an even stronger position than their counterparts elsewhere for there was not the antagonism from the “lace curtain” – that is – established and respectable Irish, evident in American centres.<sup>37</sup>

In fairness to Lynch, the trend was irreversible. It is clear, however, that the Archbishop was particularly ineffective in dealing with stemming the tide because he did not comprehend, in any effective way, the process of modernization. Lynch continued to cling to the values he had been taught in Ireland in the first half of the century. These beliefs and the actions they inspired were not often effective in a world which, by the end of Lynch’s reign, had undergone a drastic transformation.

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<sup>35</sup> D. W. Miller, “Irish Catholicism and the Great Famine.” *Journal of Social History*. v. 9. (1975), p. 83.

<sup>36</sup> Thernstrom, *Poverty and Progress: Social Mobility in a Nineteenth Century City*. (Cambridge, 1969), p. 179.

<sup>37</sup> Thernstrom, p. 184