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Dec. 29: St. Thomas Becket

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He Belonged to All of Us: Thomas J. Duffy (1877-1950)

by Donald M. Schlegel

"For years he was a commanding figure and factor in what had become known as the American Catholic Way of Life. He helped write the Workmen's Compensation law of Ohio and every piece of labor legislation that was presented in the General Assembly from 1920 to 1950. In all his work in so-called social legislation, he brought the mind of the Church and sought to apply the teachings

of the Papal Encyclicals. As a result of his life and work, the lot of the laborer in Ohio was greatly improved, but at the same time, no capitalist, industrialist, or corporation suffered the loss of a penny unjustly." Thus wrote Monsignor John J. Murphy of Holy Rosary Parish in Columbus about the work of his parishioner, Thomas J. Duffy. The *Columbus Register* added that Duffy was an

"Affable Irishman, known nationally for his eloquence and his love for his fellow man. Among the priests and bishops of Ohio, he was relied upon as one to present the Catholic viewpoint in public life, not only by his words, but by his works as well." While Monsignor Murphy may have indulged in a bit of hyperbole, for the most part an investigation of Duffy's life bears out his pastor's glowing opinion.

Early Years

Thomas was born in Burslem, Staffordshire, England on May 13, 1877, the same town where his mother, Anna McGarry, had been born. His father, Michael Duffy, was a native of County Roscommon. Thomas was the second of the couple's fifteen children. The family came to America in 1887 and lived for a time in New Jersey but by 1889 had moved to Wheeling, W.Va. Thomas studied in parochial schools and attended a business college. At age eighteen he became a potter, like his father. A year later, foreshadowing his future work, he was chairman of an arbitration committee that gained national approval by settling a two-week streetcar strike in Wheeling.²

Lacking an extensive formal education, Thomas worked constantly to increase his knowledge. Early in life he came to know the things, both good and evil, that can be achieved through the power of speech, so he trained himself in the art of oratory. He became a U.S. citizen in 1898 and by 1900 had moved to East Liverpool, Ohio, where he was a "jiggerman" in a pottery works. That year he joined East Liverpool's Carroll Council No. 509 of the Knights of Columbus and within the year he was elected grand knight of the council.³

The family followed him to East Liverpool after Michael died in Wheeling in 1901. The reason Thomas had a very personal interest in the welfare of the pottery workers is clear: of the seven siblings who were working in 1910, six of them were pottery finishers, turners, decorators, or handlers.⁴

Into the Labor Movement

In July, 1899, Thomas was elected secretary of the National Brotherhood of Operative Potters.

In May, 1903, he was elected president,⁵ becoming the youngest national president of any labor organization in the country. He worked with his laboring brethren but also with his counterpart, W. E. Wells of the pottery manufacturers' organization, to negotiate settlements of pay scales and working conditions. In this work he travelled to negotiations and union meetings around the country.⁶

The NBOP had been formed in 1890 when the potters in the East Liverpool area had broken away from the faltering Knights of Labor. "Under the strong leadership of Albert S. Hughes, Thomas J. Duffy, and Edward Menge, the NBOP was generally successful in attracting members and in bringing about favorable changes in labor-management relations." By 1911 it had secured a uniform wage contract and had about 6,500 members.⁷

In a speech before the union's convention in Akron in 1906, Duffy declared that violence was no more part of the labor movement than hazing was part of education. "Organized labor has a mind, a heart and a conscience and is fighting with the weapons of truth and reason."

Duffy also at this early stage of his career was involved in founding the Militia of Christ, of which he was recording secretary. To oppose the rapid growth of socialist influence in the American Federation of Labor, labor leader John Mitchell joined with Father Peter Dietz in forming the Militia of Christ for Social Service. Father Dietz organized this group at the November 1910 AF of L convention. Operating under the motto "Thy will be done," executive membership was limited to practicing Catholics. It was a religious, patriotic, and unionist fraternity of Catholic labor leaders. The Militia promoted trade agreements and industrial peace. It was concerned with both stemming the socialist tide within the labor movement and challenging the anti-union employers who attacked from outside the movement.

But by the end of 1911 the Militia was simply surviving, not prospering, and within another year Dietz had it absorbed by the Social Service Commission of the American Federation of Catholic Societies. This kept the movement going, via weekly newsletters and other works, until 1917.9

Even after moving on to political and government work, Duffy remained a force in the Potters' union. In 1917 he went to Canada and there addressed a hostile group of potters who wanted no part of him or the National Brotherhood of Operative Potters. He apparently went to gain the support of Canadian pottery workers for upcoming wage negotiations, to be supported by threat of a potential strike that fall. Duffy sat down at the end of two hours and two hundred men got in line to sign up. "The switch found him unprepared. 'Thad to improvise a ritual,' he says with a reflective smile.

"How did he work the transformation?

"'Or, I knew most of them were French, so I talked some about Napoleon and some about the Pope's labor encyclical..."¹⁰

Family

Thomas married Anna Mahoney before Rev. Thomas M. Smyth, pastor of St. Aloysius Church in East Liverpool, on Nov. 4, 1908. She was a daughter of East Liverpool policeman Michael Mahony. Over the next fourteen years they had seven children:

- 1) a daughter, born and died in July, 1909, who was buried in St. Aloysius Cemetery, East Liverpool.
- 2) Aileen M. Duffy, born in East Liverpool on Oct. 13, 1910; married in 1940 to Joseph M. Howard (Joseph Howard was nephew to Father Matt A. Smith and Bishop Francis Howard and brother of Monsignor Matthew Howard; he and Aileen moved to Washington, D.C. and had several children.)
- 3) Thomas A. Duffy, born in Columbus on Sept. 3, 1912, married in 1938 to Louise Keller
- 4) Bernard J. Duffy, born about 1915
- 5) John C. Duffy, born about 1917
- 6) Mary Duffy, born in Columbus on June 19, 1919; married in 1942 to John McCauley and lived in Newport News, Va.
- 7) Anne Virginia Duffy, born in Columbus on July 3, 1922; married in 1951 to William F. Weldon

Many considered Duffy "the ideal Christian father" to this family. As wide and varied as his activities were, his first concern was for the welfare of his wife and children. When not away on business, he spent his time at home.¹¹

Governmental Efforts for Workers

The Ohio General Assembly in 1910 passed a law establishing the State Liability Board of Awards. Three members were to be appointed by the governor, would be paid salaries of \$5,000, and were to devote themselves exclusively to their duties. They were to oversee a voluntary state fund for compensation of injured workmen. The legislation offered to employers freedom from litigation if they would subscribe to the fund and the threat of a penalty if they did not. On the other hand the injured employee was assured of an award; or could sue, at his option, if the employer had been guilty of gross dereliction of duty in failing to provide him a reasonably safe place to work.¹²

Duffy was appointed a member of the Board by Governor Harmon in 1911. The other appointees were Wallace D. Yaple of Chillicothe, chairman, representing the general public, and Morris Woodhull of Dayton, representing employers. Duffy later became chairman.¹³ "During the early years of the operation of the Ohio plan of workmen's compensation, it devolved on Mr. Duffy principally to undertake the ponderous task of 'selling' the plan to the employers of the State and to the public. In the face of much opposition from uninformed and inimical parties, he successfully defended the plan over the years of its inception, and to him must be given major credit for the strong foundation on which the Ohio plan now rests."¹⁴

A movement to make workmen's compensation mandatory had to await amendment of the Ohio constitution, which the voters approved in 1912. In order to settle on a policy regarding a mandatory system, Governor Cox called a conference at his home late in January, 1913. Among those present were Attorney General Timothy S. Hogan, Chairman Wallace D. Yaple and member Thomas J. Duffy of the State Liability Board of Awards, Lieutenant

Governor Hugh L. Nichols, James W. Faulkner, Columbus correspondent of the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, Senator William Green of Coshocton, sponsor for the 1910 law, Senator Carl D. Friebolin of Cuyahoga county, and William L. Finley of Kenton, chairman of the Democratic State Executive Committee. Frank Davis Jr. of the Attorney General's office drew up the act, modeled largely on the law in force in Wisconsin. ¹⁵ The law was passed that spring.

In 1913, under this law, Governor Cox appointed Duffy, along with Wallace D. Yaple and M. B. Hammond (a professor at Ohio State University), to the new Industrial Commission of Ohio, which replaced the State Liability Board of Awards. (According to some accounts, it was in 1913 that Duffy moved his growing family to Columbus, where they lived on fashionable Franklin Park South.) The commission would direct manufacturers and businessmen as to the way in which their plants and places of business would be operated with regard to safety appliances, health measures, and even the number of hours of employment. It would also direct the employees regarding their manner of work and observance of rules and regulations and act as arbitrators whenever there would be a question of wages or hours of employment. It took over the powers of the Commissioner of labor statistics, the chief inspector of mines, the chief inspector of workshops and factories, the chief examiner of steam engines, the board of boiler rules, and the State board of arbitration and conciliation.¹⁶

Duffy said that in carrying out the laws the board would do much to allay the discontent that caused friction between the manufacturer and employee. He described the overall intent of the law as follows:

The prime object of the new commission will be to establish more harmonious relations between employer and employee and inculcate in each a better spirit of cooperation. I believe that the preservation of the present system of society depends more upon the fair and reasonable adjustment of industrial problems than it does upon the settlement of political questions.

The commission will be the instrument for impressing upon capital and labor that each has duties and responsibilities that justly cannot be shirked, that each has rights that cannot be ignored. The commission in administering the compulsory workman's compensation law will not only give relief to the injured workman and his family during the period of hts disability, but will give all industrial workers and their dependents peace of mind through the knowledge that the State will take care of them under such conditions.

We hope to see these humanitarian principles carried further in succeeding years. If this insurance feature is extended to cover occupational cases, periods of sickness and old age, it will have gone a great way toward eliminating that discontent which results from uncertainty of employment.

When the workman's compulsory compensation-law becomes operative in Ohio after January 1, 1914, we estimate that more than a million wage earners will come under State protection. What single factor could do more toward abolishing poverty and bringing industrial peace? Law suits between employer and employee will be practically eliminated, and thus one of the chief sources of dissatisfaction will be removed.

The new law provides that the Industrial Commission shall endeavor to adjust disputes, and if possible avoid strikes and lockouts. I do not believe in compulsory arbitration, but I do believe in conciliatory measures whereby such a body as the commission might be instrumental in bringing the employer and employee together to settle their differences.

Instead of wasting immense sums in fights between employers and employees, why not save them and use them for mutual benefit?¹⁷

Duffy defended the law and procedure against those who, from greed and self aggrandizement, tried to have it changed. ¹⁸ Various disruptive attacks on the law were made in the General Assembly in the next years, from a desire for political spoils or other motives. "It was not a pleasant task that the commissioners faced, and the worry incident thereto

has been felt by his friends to be one of the reasons for the breakdown in the health of Chairman Yaple, subsequently resulting in his death in office in 1917. He died a martyr to his efforts to make the experiment of the state a success."19 A movement in the General Assembly in 1917 to modify the law was halted by Duffy, who demolished the bill's chance of passage at a hearing before the Labor Committee. His arraignment of the proposed changes was "scathing, upsetting all the arguments which had been made in its behalf. His strictures on the measures left Mr. H. T. Weston, former rating actuary, with little defense for the proposal. From that time forward it was looked upon as a grave error to support the bill. Carrying out his later announced policy to 'sound the alarm every time the enemy approaches,' Mr. Duffy kept the ears of members buzzing with the protests against the bill. It was, however, forced to a vote with the result that a bare 25 enrolled themselves for it and 75 against it."²⁰

He also helped spread the system to other states. In December, 1916 he spoke at a conference on social insurance in Washington, D.C., at which he severely criticized interests that were "willfully and peristently misrepresenting the facts" as to Ohio's workmen compensation system in order to prevent introduction of the system in other states. He declared that the mandatory Ohio system was not an encroachment on private business because it had not existed as a private system before being created by the state.

In July, 1918, Duffy interrupted his work in Ohio to travel to Washington to assist in establishing a labor recruiting system for war needs, 21 but soon he was back at the work of spreading the compensation system. He testified before the Minnesota Legislature and journeyed to Albany and Lansing to assist in making this begining of so-called Social Legislation part of the law in New York and Michigan. 22

In 1920, in the midst of this work, he passed the Ohio bar.²³ Accounts of his education vary. Some say he was graduated from the Ohio State University College of Law, but Ohio State has no

record of his degree. Others note that he studied law under W. K. Gaston of East Liverpool.²⁴ (To be concluded)

NOTES

Sources will be listed at the end of Part 2.

- 1) *The Columbus Register*, Jan. 20, 1950. (Hereafter *Register* 1950)
- 2) ibid. *The Ohio State Journal* (hereafter OSJ), Jan. 13, 1950. Death certificates of Thomas and of his mother. 1900 and 1910 censuses. Willson. Brown p 210.
- 3) Murphy. 1920 census. *Niagara Falls Gazette*, Jan. 25, 1930.
- 4) 1910 census, East Liverpool, Ward 2, family 249
- 5) Brown 210. *Syracuse Evening Telegram*, July 3,1902.
- 6) Buffalo Express, Oct. 26, 1905.
- 7) speccoll.library.kent.edu/labor/ibpaw.html
- 8) New York Sun, July 10, 1906.
- 9) Phelan, Craig, Divided Loyalties: The Public and Private Life of Labor Leader John Mitchell (1994) pp 342-343. Karson, Marc "Catholic Anti-Socialism" in Failure of a Dream? Eassays in the History of American Socialism, John H. M. Lasslett, ed. (1984) p 92. The Columbus Register Jan. 20, 1950.
- 10) Willson.
- 11) Register 1950.
- 12) Mengert p 12.
- 13) Mengert p 13.
- 14) Brown p 160.
- 15) Mengert pp 19, 24-25.
- 16) *New York Sun*, Aug. 5, 1913. Mengert pp 24-25.
- 17) New York Sun, Aug. 5, 1913.
- 18) Murphy.
- 19) Mengert p 29.
- 20) Mengert pp 36-37.
- 21) OSJ July 12, 1918.
- 22) Murphy. New York Call, Feb. 13, 1922.
- 23) OSJ Dec. 17, 1920 p 9
- 24) Brown p 210.

Saint Vincent Orphan Asylum and Parish Baptisms, 1875-1890

(Concluded, from Vol. XXXVIII, No. 11)

1890, concluded

- Feb. 2, George, born June 4, 1882, son of same; spons. same.
- Feb. 9, Mary Lorena Louise, born Feb. 14, 1880, daughter of Michael and Mary Doyle; spons. Edward and Mary Heffernan. [R]
- Feb. 9, Thomas Edward, born Jan. 27, 1882, son of same; spons. same. [R]
- Mar. 2, Henrietta Emily, born Feb. 13, daughter of Anthony Vogel and Philomena Kerbel; spons. Philip and Emily Vogel.
- Mar. 23, Helen Marie, born Feb. 4, daughter of Peter Notestine and Louise Kunkler; spons. Joseph and Johanna Gambs.
- Mar. 30, Leonard, born Mar. 21, son of Jacob Fischer and Agatha Beiler; spons. Joseph Schmitt and Maria Baumeister.
- Apr. 10, Maria, born Mar. 10, daughter of Magnus Belz and Clara Keller; spons. Maria Reidelbach.
- May 4, Charles, born Mar. 26, son of George Hoff and Maria Volmer; spons. Magnus and Clara Belz.
- May 4, Josephina, born Mar. 3, daughter of Rudolph Baldeser and Maria Scholl; spons. Josephine Drummer.
- May 11, Peter Paul, born Apr. 27, son of Joseph (Klusky) Troiwaski and Catherine Woizniak; spons. Lawr. Woizniak and Maria Katrini.
- June 1, Mary Ellen, born May 7, daughter of Thomas W. Miller and Rebecca Johnson; spons. James and Clara Miller.
- June 15, Walter Leo, born June 6, son of Patrick Strapp and Ann Kennedy; spons. John and Rose Schaefer.
- Aug. 31, Walter Laurence, born Aug. 22, son of Joseph Schwartz and Maria Elizabeth Spahn; spons. Martin Walter and Louisa Kelner.
- Aug. 31, Laurence (Elmer), born July 24, son of Michael Walter and Ellen Seely; spons.Joseph Lewingdon and Louise Notestine.
- Sept. 7, Edward Joseph, born Aug. 24, son of

- Thomas Knadler and Caroline Engler; spons. Edward F. and Elizabeth Williams.
- Sept. 8, John, born June 13, 1881, son of Matthew Burton and Anna Schreiver; spons. Robert Cronin.
- Sept. 8, Mary, born Aug. 27, 1883, daughter of same; spons. Mary McMullen.
- Sept. 8, Francis, born May 6, 1886, son of same; spons. Robert Cronin.
- Sept. 8, Louise, born May 16, 1885, daughter of Henry Cameron and Sarah Solmon; spons. Mary McMullen. [R]
- Sept. 14, James Joseph, born Sept. 5, son of George Lasher and Catherine Hanlon; spons. Charles Knadler and Mary Hanlon.
- Sept. 9, privately, William, born Sept. 9, son of John Curry and Martha Moffitt; spons. Edward and Mary Moffitt.
- Oct. 12, Elizabeth Louise, born Sept. 20, daughter of Thomas Kelly and Catherine Ryan; spons. Patrick and Mary J. McCook.
- Oct. 14, Reginald Miller, born Sept. 23, son of Lewis B. Tussing and Julia A. Miller; spons. James E. Miller and Maud R. Medary.
- Oct. 19, Edmund Glenn, born Oct. 6, son of John McCarty and Magdalene Miller; spons. Dudley A. and Clara M. Filler.
- Oct. 19, Bernard, born July 21, 1883, son of George Lasher and Johanna Cole; spons. James and Elizabeth Hanlon.
- Nov. 19, Grace Edith, born Nov. 11, daughter of James Kearney and Mary McCormick; spons. James and Ann McCormick.
- Nov. 19, John Joseph, born Oct. 17, 1888, son of Matthew Burton and Anna Schreiver; spons. Rev. John B. Eis.
- Dec. 7, Frances Helen, born Nov. 21, daughter of John Meinert and Barbara Brandt; spons. George Meinert and Frances Rudolph.
- Dec. 7, Helen Barbara, born Nov. 8, daughter of Caspar Metz and Margaret Wanger; spons. Francis Wolf and Barbara Straub.

Abstracts from the *Catholic Telegraph*

(Continued, from Vol. XXXVIII, No. 7)

July 21 1860 Seminary Receipts		
St. John's, Bellaire	\$14 15	
Belmont Station	4 50	
St. George's, Coshocton	18 00	
St. Mary's, Mattinglys	17 75	
St. Mary's, Lancaster	62 00	
St. Mary's, Chillicothe	68 00	
Sisters of Notre Dame and		
Boarders, Chillicothe	8 00	
St. John's, Logan	20 00	
St. Barnabas', Deavertown	5 00	
St. Mary's, Wilkesville	40 10	
Holy Name, Jackson	2 97	
Cross Roads, Wilkesville Mission	2 00	
St. Joseph's, Circleville and Missions	25 25	
St. Peter's, Scioto co.	6 03	
Bellefontaine and Marion congregations 30 00		
Holy Trinity, Somerset	20 50	

July 28, 1860

Died,

At Urbana, O., on the 12th of July, at half-past twelve o'clock, WILLIE, infant son of W. M. and E. Anderson.

August 4, 1860	
Seminary Recepits	
St.Mary's Church, Noble co.	\$ 14 85
Receipts for the Papal Fund	
St. Peter's, Chillicothe	\$ 43 00

August 11, 1860

Died,

At New York, on the 27th of July, in the 38th year of his age, Mr. HUGH O'REILLY, a native of the Parish of Belturbid, Puttahan, Ireland, and for fifteen years a resident of Portsmouth, Ohio.

August 18, 1860 Seminary Receipts

St. Francis Church (Sunday Creek)	\$20 00
Rev. Mr. Phew	10 00
Deavertown church	5 00

ST. JOSEPH'S COLLEGE, SOMERSET, PERRY CO., O., August 8th, 1860

Editors Catholic Telegraph:

Sirs:—Please insert the following lines in your valuable paper:—

On the 4th of August, the members of the Dominican Order of St. Joseph's and vicinity assembled at the church of St. Joseph, in Perry co., Ohio, to celebrate the anniversary of their glorious founder, St. Dominic. A great concourse of people was present to witness the religious ceremonies of the day. Solemn High Mass was celebrated by Rev. J. A. Sheuermann, O.S.D. Rev. J. D. Sheehy, O.S.D., assisted as deacon, and Mr. J. A. Rooney, a professed member of the Order, as subdeacon. The choir of Holy Trinity, Somerset, was in attendance. One of the nuns, Sister Benedicta, performed at the organ. A beautiful Mass was played, the name of which I have been unable to learn. After Mass a splendid dinner was served up in the Library Hall. Immediately after Mass, the Rev. F. J. Dunn delivered a beautiful panegyric of St. Dominic; he spoke for the length of nearly an hour.

St. Joseph's is a very beautiful place, one coming from the South may view it for many miles distance. I learned from a reliable source that there is at present no Organist in the place. I believe the congregation is at the present time too destitute of means to employ one. It is to be hoped that St. Joseph's congregation will yet do well. It ought to feel proud, that it has had the honor of being the first in the State of Ohio. May the Catholics of St. Joseph's congregation go on strenously with their work, and may they show in their actions that they are not behind in adoring god in his holy temple. If they do this, St. Joseph's will become one of their brightest ornaments.—Yours truly, M.O.D.

August 25, 1860 Episcopal Visitation Portsmouth, Aug. 26 Ironton St. Lawrence's, 30th August Sacred Heart, Pomeroy, 6th Oct. Immaculate Conception, Noble co., Oct. 13.

Seminary Receipts

Missions attended from Pomeroy \$28.

September 1, 1860

There were one hundred and two persons Confirmed last Sunday in the church of the Holy Redeemer, Portsmouth, the English and German Candidates for the Sacrament having united. High Mass was sung by Rev. Mr. Karge assisted by the Rev. brothers James and Michael O'Donoghue as deacon and subdeacon. The English church has been much improved since our last visit and arrangements have been made to build a new German church next summer. On Monday church was given at Pond Creek (Holy Trinity), a French Colony of forty families, principally from the Department of Haute Saone. All evinced an edifying anxiety to profit by the occasion to receive the Holy Sacraments. Two were Confirmed.

Seminary Recepits

St. Dominick's, M'Clu	ny, Perry co.	\$1054
St. Pius, South Fork		5 96
Our Lady of Good Hop	e, Fairfield co.	8 65
St. Joseph's	44	7 23
Sacred Heart	44	5 28
Rev. H. Lange	44	10 00

September 8, 1860

Died,

At Chauncey, Athens co., on the 3d of August, Miss SUSAN EDWARDS, aged 18 years and six months. May she rest in peace.

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St. Vincent de Paul's, Mt. Vernon	\$100 00
St. Luke's, Danville	90 00
Holy Cross, Columbus	142 00

Rev. Mr. Hemsteger	10 00
Rev. Mr. Karel	10 00

September 15, 1860

Died.

At Chauncey, Ohio, Aug. 2d, 1860, of Consumption, SUSAN MARIA, daughter of W. M. EDWARDS—aged 18 years, 4 months and 7 days. The deceased, the day previous to her death, received all the rights of the Church, at the hands of Rev. Father Tierney, of Wilksville. May she rest in peace.

September 22, 1860

Episcopal Visitation

St. Joseph's, Monroe co., 15th Oct.

St.John's, Miltonsburgh, 17th

St. Thomas and St. Nicholas, Zanesville, 20th

St. Laurence, Ironton, 27th Oct.

September 29, 1860

Receipts for the Papal Fund

St. Lawrence's, Ironton \$9 25

Subscriptions this quarter

(name, post office, date of issue)

H. Brennan, Marietta Sept. 15

James E. Butler, Ironton July 7

John Cane, East Rush Creek July 21

R. Devine, Lancaster Aug. 4

Rev. B. M. Geiss, Pomeroy Sept. 8

Francis Howard, Columbus Sept. 29

M. Molone, Lancaster Aug. 4

Wm. Naughton, Columbus July 28

Wm. O'Driscoll, Columbus Sept. 15

Rev. W. Phew, Chapel Hill July 7

Rev. C. Wiese, Delaware July 7

Rev. Mr. Winands, Carrollton Sept. 22

(To be continued)

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