

built, with the broad shoulders and thick chest of a wrestler. He liked to hike mountain trails, hunt, fish, and ski, a sport he took up in his fifties. In his later years, he built a small home in the rugged and breathtakingly beautiful Olympic Mountains of Washington. He loved this site with a singular passion. It was truly his heaven on earth.

Max also had a strong aesthetic side. He loved music, painting, literature, the theatre, and the dance. And, like all humanists, he enjoyed good food, good wine, and stimulating conversation. In this sense, he would have felt at ease in Dr. Johnson's London. He was, in essence, an eighteenth-century man, a true son of the Enlightenment.

It goes without saying that his graduate students shared all aspects of Max's rich life. The Savelle home was an extension of the classroom. Our relationship was not confined to the campus. We fished, hunted, and hiked with him. This writer can recall some memorable experiences as we engaged in the 'strenuous life.'

Max was elected a member of the American Antiquarian Society in 1973. Because of distance and declining health, he never attended a meeting. He did, however, incorporate the rich resources of the Society into his scholarship, and sent many students to Worcester to research.

A series of illnesses, coupled with the ravaging effects of age, finally overpowered his indomitable spirit. Max's 'Quest for Sophia Sancta' ended in Seattle, Washington, on August 13, 1979, at the age of eighty-three. At his request, there were no funeral services.

Louis Leonard Tucker

JOHN JOSEPH WRIGHT

The death of John Cardinal Wright, first bishop of Worcester, at the Youville Rehabilitation Hospital in Cambridge, Massa-

chusetts, on August 10, 1979, marked the passing from our midst of one of the outstanding prelates of the Roman Catholic church in recent history. His death came as a result of a persistent pneumonia, aggravated by a muscular disorder that had afflicted him for several years and had earlier been diagnosed as polymyositis.

At the time of his death, Cardinal Wright was prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy and the highest-ranking American prelate in the Vatican Curia. This congregation is charged with the spiritual and material welfare of diocesan priests throughout the world. It deals with such wide-ranging matters as old-age pensions for priests to the administration of church property. It is also responsible for catechetics—the teaching of religion.

Born in the Dorchester section of Boston on July 18, 1909, the eldest of the six children of John J. and Harriet L. (Cokely) Wright, John Wright graduated with honors from Boston Latin School and Boston College. During those years, he worked as a stock boy in the Boston Public Library where he began a life-long interest in books and became an avid reader of them.

He began studies for the priesthood at St. John's Seminary, Brighton, Massachusetts, in 1931 and completed them at the North American College in Rome where he was ordained in 1935. He remained in Rome to earn a doctoral degree in theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University, meanwhile engaging in parish work in England and France. Returning to Boston, he taught at St. John's Seminary and subsequently served as secretary to William Cardinal O'Connell and his successor, Richard Cardinal Cushing.

Pope Pius XII appointed him auxiliary bishop of Boston in 1947 and less than three years later in January 1950 named him bishop of the newly created Diocese of Worcester, an area coterminous with Worcester County.

Cardinal Cushing said at the time that the new see would be headed by 'one of the most gifted persons I have ever known

for pastoral zeal and intellectual endowments.' The nine years of Bishop Wright's episcopate in Worcester that followed witnessed the verity of the cardinal's words. The new bishop quickly demonstrated his outstanding leadership qualities, organizing imaginative yet practical programs and agencies to meet the needs of his people.

Offices of Catholic Charities, Religious Education, and Youth Ministry were established along with a chancery for central administration; the diocesan school system was reorganized; and a diocesan paper, *The Catholic Free Press*, published—all within a very few months of his installation. In subsequent years, thirty new parishes were established throughout the diocese. Churches and a variety of facilities to provide for the worshiping, educational, and social needs of the people were built or acquired.

Worcester's first bishop is best remembered here, however, not as an innovative administrator and builder, but as a pastor whose first love was to be out among his people, preaching, teaching, leading them to a deeper understanding and living of the gospel message.

In this ministry, Bishop Wright was outstanding. Few preachers in our time have been his equal in eloquence, rhetorical skill, and depth of solid theological knowledge. His razor-sharp mind, urbane wit and humor, and ability to dazzle an audience will not be forgotten by those who had the privilege of hearing him.

His episcopal motto was *Resonare Christum*—to Echo Christ—and both within the diocese and far beyond its boundaries, where his reputation had spread, Bishop Wright was ceaseless in his ministry as teacher, preacher, and lecturer. Humbly conscious of the gifts with which the Lord had endowed him and of his responsibility to be good steward of them, the young bishop ventured far and near to address audiences of every kind, but seldom failing to echo in some measure Christ's message of God's redeeming love.

In 1959, Pope John XXIII transferred him to the Diocese of Pittsburgh. There he continued both within and without the diocese his pastoral ministry with outstanding zeal.

He was a leader in ecumenism before the word was well known. In 1961, he planned and preached at a retreat in Kentucky for Protestant clergymen who came from twelve states to participate. Later in the '60s, he became the first Catholic bishop to address the national conferences of Methodists and Lutherans.

During the Vatican Council, Bishop Wright played a prominent role of leadership, being chief architect of the document on the laity in the Church and making an important contribution to the statement on religious liberty. In the post-Vatican II period, he was a U.S. delegate to the first four World Synods of Bishops in Rome: 1967, 1969, 1971, and 1974. Pope Paul VI appointed him one of the three presidents of the 1971 synod.

During these same years, Bishop Wright was often chosen by his fellow bishops of the United States to chair the drafting of pastoral letters issued in their national assemblies. He was chief contributor to two of the most notable of these documents, 'The Church in Our Day' and 'Human Life in Our Day.'

In March 1969, Pope Paul VI appointed Bishop Wright to the College of Cardinals and shortly after named him prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy.

In Rome, Cardinal Wright was noted for his accessibility, long hours of work, and close personal involvement in projects under study. He spent many weekends in different parts of Italy or Europe, preaching, meeting with the clergy, and taking part in liturgical ceremonies. People from Worcester, Pittsburgh, or Boston visiting Rome were amazed at his willingness to see them and to enjoy reminiscing about their earlier relationship and mutual interests. Despite his Vatican duties and until his illness limited his travels, the cardinal returned frequently to the United States to visit friends and family and to speak on college campuses and at meetings of Catholic or-

ganizations. He was the author of several books on social teachings and of numerous articles and reviews in leading journals. One of his books, *Words in Pain*, a meditation on the seven last words, has appeared in four languages. He himself was fluent in Italian and French.

Cardinal Wright's relationship to the American Antiquarian Society is of more than passing interest to its members. He was elected to membership in October 1975, and, in response, wrote to President James Russell Wiggins to express his gratitude and happiness in accepting membership in the Society. Some weeks later in a less formal and more chatty letter, he responded to a welcoming letter from the Director, Marcus McCorison, saying that it was a special pleasure to hear from the son of a friend of years gone by. 'I worked with your father [a Congregational minister],' he wrote, 'in the 1943-1947 period and we had many opportunities to contribute, I like to think, to the good spirit of the greater Boston community in the war and immediately post-war years. It is a privilege to be associated with the American Antiquarian Society, the headquarters of which I passed at least twice a day while I was Bishop of Worcester—far away and long ago.'

Earlier during his years in Worcester, Bishop Wright had written to the then-director, Clarence Brigham, to request access to the files of the Society for a member of the Sisters of Notre Dame teaching at Notre Dame Academy on Salisbury Street. In his letter dated July 17, 1956, he explained that the sister was working for a graduate degree and that her dissertation was on George Bancroft. He went on to say that he would count it a personal favor if she might have any needed permission. Mr. Brigham responded a few days later that the Library had much material relating to George Bancroft and that he would be happy to have her use the archives as much as she might need. Bishop Wright was quick to express his gratitude to Mr. Brigham 'for your courteous note of July 18 and for your kindness to Sister Martina. . . . It is good to be living and

working in a community with institutions served by people like you,' he concluded.

In December 1956, Mr. Brigham learned of a work that had been published under the direction of Bishop Wright, *The Church in Worcester, New England*. It was a brief history of the Catholic church in the county, featuring drawings by Jack Frost of some of the outstanding churches and institutions. Mr. Brigham wrote to the bishop saying, 'Do you think that you could steer a copy in our direction, and, of course, if it could be inscribed by you, it would be much more appreciated by us.' The bishop responded, saying that he was happy to send 'two copies of our little publication. One, you may wish for the Library shelves of the Society. The other, I ask you to accept for yourself as a token of neighborly good will and friendly best wishes.'

One of Cardinal Wright's scholarly interests, which became a lifelong hobby, was his interest in St. Joan of Arc and his collecting of works relating to her life. Some years ago, he donated this outstanding research collection to the Boston Public Library. Typical of his humor is his response to a questioner who asked about his interest in this young heroine who had been burned at the stake. He replied, 'Joan reminds me that bishops can make mistakes.'

He was often categorized as a social liberal and a theological conservative, but he was quick to respond that he was not comfortable in either camp and was happy to dissatisfy the extremists in both. His motto, he would respond, was open-mindedness. In this, he has perhaps left us a heritage on which we all need to reflect in these often controversial times in which we live.

Bernard J. Flanagan

Copyright of Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society is the property of American Antiquarian Society and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.