

# The Hierarchy — 'Shepherds Of The Flock'

Bishops through their consecration form links in unbroken chain of Apostolic succession which has spanned nineteen centuries

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AMERICAN Archbishops and Bishops are no different from other Catholic Archbishops and Bishops. In their own dioceses they are the legitimate successors of the Apostles, governing with the same power with which the Apostles directed the early Church. They, too, by their consecration, form a link in that unbroken chain of succession which has spanned 19 centuries and which will outlive every human institution. Along with all other Archbishops and Bishops all over the world they are a part of that wonderful miracle of the Catholic Church—the Catholic Hierarchy!

But the American Hierarchy itself can almost be called a miracle of growth. On October 6, 1789, hardly five years after the Liberty Bell had proclaimed independence to the 13 States, the first diocese was established in the United States. Its site was Baltimore, Maryland, and John Carroll of Carrollton was consecrated as its first Bishop. Just 20 years later, in 1808, three offshoots from the parent diocese were founded in New York, Philadelphia, and Bardonia, Pa.; at the same time Baltimore was erected into the first province or archdiocese in the United States.

Since the founding of this first province, little more than a century and a quarter ago, the history of the American Catholic Hierarchy has been one of almost unbelievable expansion. Today there are 24 provinces in the United States, and 106 dioceses (two of the latter of the Ukrainian and Greek rite). At the beginning of 1953 there were 27 Archbishops and 154 Bishops in the United States.

FOR the more orderly ruling of the Church, each country is divided into a number of provinces, each ruled by an Archbishop who is known as the metropolitan of the province. Under the authority of each metropolitan fall one or more dioceses, these governed by Bishops, who are known as suffragans—that is, they are subject in certain matters to the metropolitan. Each metropolitan, or archbishop, besides ruling his own diocese, has certain rights and duties over the other dioceses of his province. His rights and duties are clearly expressed and limited today by the Code of Canon Law (the official law book for the Catholic Church), principal among them being his duty of watching over the faith in the province, guarding against abuses and presiding over the meetings of the Bishops of his province.

Bishops who possess authority over individual dioceses are called ordinaries of the diocese which they govern. This title, given them because their authority is immediate and direct, distinguishes them from coadjutor and auxiliary bishops. A coadjutor bishop is one who is assigned to a diocese by the Holy See because of the health of the ordinary, the size and importance of the diocese or for some other weighty reason. It is the coadjutor's duty to assist the ordinary in ministering to the needs of the diocese, and upon the death of the ordinary the coadjutor has the right to succeed him as the head of the diocese. Auxiliary bishops are assigned to dioceses for similar reasons, but theirs is not the right to succeed the ordinary upon his death.

Ordinaries are also called residential bishops to distinguish them from titular bishops. The latter are so called because, while appointed and consecrated by authority of the Holy See, they still possess no authority over a separate diocese. Upon their consecration they are given the title of Bishops of Sees which flourished in the early Church but which today are almost entirely occupied by in-



Bishop Kearney congratulates Bishop Casey on his elevation to the Catholic Hierarchy on Feb. 18, 1953

del. Coadjutor and auxiliary bishops are also given the title of one of these once-Catholic Sees; but not all titular bishops are coadjutors or auxiliaries.

THE Code of Canon Law determines that a priest must possess certain qualities in order to be made a bishop. He must be at least 30 years of age and must have been ordained at least five years. Moreover, he must be endowed with such knowledge, piety, and ability as to fit him for such a tremendous responsibility as the governing of the faithful.

The Holy See is especially careful about the qualifications of the priests whom it chooses to elevate to the Episcopacy. By careful and secret scrutiny into the character and ability of individual priests the Holy See assures itself of maintaining the high qualifications of the Catholic Hierarchy. Because of the distance of many countries from Rome, a special law has been made regulating the appointment of bishops in these countries. The law was first made for the United States on July 25, 1916, and later applied to Canada and Newfoundland, Scotland, Brazil, Mexico and Poland.

As applied to the United States this new law for the appointment of bishops provides that every other year

beginning with 1917, each metropolitan of the different provinces of the United States shall meet with the other bishops of his province to consider the capabilities of a certain number of priests for the episcopacy. The law assures the meeting of not being of a haphazard character, for it determines that at the beginning of Lent of that year each bishop must send to his metropolitan the names of one or other priest whom he considers worthy of elevation to the episcopacy.

In selecting these names the bishop is urged to consult his official advisers as well as the more prominent pastors of the diocese. But he is free to accept or to reject their advice, and those with whom he consults are obliged to keep the discussion secret. The bishop is not limited in his selection to the priests of his own diocese. He may recommend any priest, so long as he is familiar, or made familiar, with his character and qualifications.

After all the bishops of the province have sent the names of their candidates to the archbishop, the archbishop must arrange the selections in alphabetical order, adding his own choices, and must send a copy of the list of names to each of his suffragan bishops. He also determines a date shortly after Easter on which all the bishops of the province must

meet. Until the time of the meeting each bishop is to acquaint himself as best he can with the capabilities and character of each proposed candidate.

The meeting at which the candidates are considered and their qualities voted upon is most solemn and secret. No one save the bishops of the province may be present and at the opening of the meeting each bishop must take an oath of strict secrecy. One of the bishops acts as secretary of the meeting, noting everything of importance revealed in the course of the meeting. The character and capabilities of each priest whose name appears on the archbishop's list are discussed. After the discussion the bishops proceed to vote upon the acceptability of each candidate.

The voting is done, not by means of writing, but by the use of differently colored marbles or other objects—white to signify a favorable vote; black, unfavorable; and another color, an undecided vote. There may be more than one ballot. After the voting the secretary of the meeting draws up the minutes or proceedings in the form of a document and records the result of the ballot. Two copies of this document are made, one to be sent to the Apostolic Delegate and forwarded by him to the Holy See; the other to be kept in the

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