

2022

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Gutowski, James, "Holy Cross Comes to Cleveland: A Partnership in Catholic Secondary Education" (2022). *2022 Faculty Bibliography*. 48.

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U.S. Catholic Historian, Volume 40, Number 4, Fall 2022, pp. 69-88
(Article)



Published by The Catholic University of America Press

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Holy Cross Comes to Cleveland: A Partnership in Catholic Secondary Education

James A. Gutowski

In 1943 Bishop Edward F. Hoban came to Cleveland, Ohio, as coadjutor bishop to Archbishop Joseph Schrembs. Having risen to the episcopacy under the tutelage of Archbishop George Mundelein of Chicago, Hoban shared his mentor's propensity for expanding and streamlining the work of his diocese, including education. Hoban's efforts to expand Catholic high school education in Cleveland began at the same time that the Brothers of Holy Cross, led by Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer, C.S.C., sought to become an independent province within their congregation. Over the next twenty years, this confluence of institutional needs induced brother and bishop to develop a unique and productive working relationship that served the needs of both.

Keywords: Congregation of Holy Cross; Catholic secondary education; Diocese of Cleveland; Cleveland, Ohio; Akron, Ohio; Gilmour Academy; Saint Edward High School; Archbishop Hoban High School

Introduction

In January 1943, Edward F. Hoban assumed his appointment as coadjutor to the bishop of Cleveland, assisting the ailing Archbishop Joseph Schrembs, who was fighting a losing battle with diabetes.¹ In his new post, Bishop Hoban found an ecclesial environment similar to that of Chicago, where his priestly career began. Both were in big cities located on one of the Great Lakes, had growing Catholic populations, and had a significant number of ethnic parishes. He brought an episcopal philosophy shaped largely by his career as an auxiliary to Mundelein, as well as an abiding

1. Though Cleveland is a diocese, the Holy See conferred the personal title of archbishop on Schrembs in 1939. In 1952 Pope Pius XII would confer the same title on Schrembs's successor: Edward F. Hoban.

respect and affection for the brothers of the Congregation of Holy Cross, who educated him in his early years at Saint Columbkille in Chicago. These impelled him to develop a more efficient model of high school education in the Diocese of Cleveland, and he invited the Brothers of Holy Cross to be an important part of that new model.

Hoban had a somewhat meteoric career in Chicago. Ordained in 1903, he was soon sent for advanced studies to Rome, where he graduated from the Gregorian University in 1906. Upon his return to Chicago, he was assigned to the chancery staff and became the archdiocese's chancellor in 1909. In 1921, he was ordained as a bishop to serve as an auxiliary to Archbishop George Mundelein and, three years later, became vicar general.² Mundelein was in a cohort of bishops that were "American-born but Roman-trained" who "came to power in the largest urban dioceses of the United States." According to historian Edward Kantowicz:

These men—such as Cardinal Mundelein in Chicago, William Cardinal O'Connell in Boston, Denis Cardinal Dougherty in Philadelphia, John Cardinal Glennon in St. Louis and, at a somewhat later date, Francis Cardinal Spellman in New York—were "consolidating bishops" who, like their counterparts in American business and government, saw the need for more order and efficiency in their bailiwicks. . . . The consolidating bishops of the first half of the twentieth century centralized and tightened the administrative structures of the church.³

Hoban fit the consolidating bishop pattern. In his twenty-plus years leading the Diocese of Cleveland, he did much to formalize and streamline diocesan operations. In education he developed a secondary school system that served multiple parishes across the different regions of the diocese.

Education as a Priority

When Bishop Hoban arrived in Cleveland, he found a fairly extensive but inadequate Catholic high school education system. In 1943 the Diocese of Cleveland included the future Diocese of Youngstown (created later that year), claiming 235 parishes, 183 of which maintained parish primary schools serving 55,535 students. Student enrollment in Catholic high schools was significantly less. The city of Cleveland hosted nine parish high schools with an average enrollment of 171 students per school. Eliminate

2. Michael J. Hynes, *History of the Diocese of Cleveland* (Cleveland: Diocese of Cleveland, 1953), 381–382.

3. Edward R. Kantowicz, "Cardinal Mundelein of Chicago and the Shaping of Twentieth Century Catholicism," *Journal of American History* 68, no. 1 (June 1981), 53–54.

Holy Name's school (561 students) and the average drops to 104 students per school. Religious communities ran twelve additional high schools in the diocese that averaged 345 students.⁴ Those with the highest enrollments were all within the city limits. The largest was Cathedral Latin, run by the Society of Mary, with 850 male students. Notre Dame Academy was staffed by the Sisters of Notre Dame with 752 female students. On the city's west side, the Jesuits sponsored Saint Ignatius High School for 718 young men. Ursuline High School in Youngstown was the largest outside the city, with 515 students, male and female.⁵ The remaining schools each taught an average of 248 students. At the same time, the diocese reported almost 15,000 infant baptisms—foreshadowing the baby boom that followed the Second World War.⁶

In 1949, Bishop Hoban's building program enabled 7,000 additional students to enroll in diocesan schools.⁷ Two years later he launched a three-year initiative, funded by a special monthly collection, to accommodate 12,000 additional students in Catholic high schools "strategically located throughout the diocese."⁸ Even toward the end of his tenure as archbishop, Hoban aggressively promoted Catholic education by forbidding college students in the diocese from attending secular colleges and universities that did not maintain a Newman Center.⁹

Many bishops across the United States shared Bishop Hoban's focus on education in the decades after the Second World War. In his historical overview of Catholic education in the United States, Timothy Walch described the postwar era as a time when "loyal young Catholics with their new homes in the suburbs were determined that their millions of children would receive a good Catholic education."¹⁰ According to Walch:

Such rapid and ceaseless growth taxed the Church mightily. Like the sorcerer's apprentice, the Church would not control what it had started.

4. *Official Catholic Directory* (New York: P.J. Kenedy & Sons, 1942), 350–361.

5. *Official Catholic Directory* (New York: P.J. Kenedy & Sons, 1942), 357–358.

6. *Official Catholic Directory* (New York: P.J. Kenedy & Sons, 1942), 361.

7. Brother Theophane Schmitt, C.S.C., to Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer, C.S.C., July 14, 1949, Archives of the Midwest Province of the Brothers Congregation of Holy Cross, Notre Dame, Indiana (hereafter BCSC).

8. "Diocese Announces Plan to Double Schools' Capacity," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, February 10, 1951.

9. "Colleges without Newman Programs Barred by Prelate," *The Catholic Transcript*, January 23, 1964.

10. Timothy Walch, *Parish School: A History of American Catholic Parochial Education from Colonial Times to the Present* (Arlington, VA: National Catholic Education Association, 2016), 123.

After urging, cajoling, and threatening the laity to establish and support Catholic schools, Catholic leaders found themselves unprepared to meet the tidal wave of demand. It was a crisis of success.¹¹

Growing up in Chicago, Hoban attended the parish school at Saint Columbkille in the West Town neighborhood of Chicago's near northwest side. It was staffed by brothers of the Congregation of Holy Cross, and though he continued his high school and college education with the Jesuits at Chicago's Saint Ignatius, throughout his life Hoban maintained a high regard and affection for the Holy Cross community.¹² When he looked to expand high school education in his diocese, he turned to the community that had started his own educational journey.

Preparing for Division

The Congregation of Holy Cross rose from the ashes of the French Revolution, which destroyed the close relationship between church and state in the nation heralded as "the eldest daughter of the Church." Father Jacques Dujarie organized communities of sisters, brothers, and priests in the early 1800s to rebuild the Catholic education system around Le Mans, France. Father Basil Moreau continued Dujarie's work and, in 1837, combined the brothers and priests to form the Association of Holy Cross, named after the Sainte-Croix neighborhood of Le Mans, in which the community formed. Responding to a plea for educators from the Bishop of Vincennes, Indiana, Father Moreau sent a priest and seven brothers to the United States in 1841. They were the nucleus of the religious community that established the University of Notre Dame, as well as several other Catholic institutions of higher learning across the United States.¹³

When Bishop Hoban made his own request to the congregation, the timing was fortuitous because the community was preparing for new beginnings. On July 1, 1946, the Congregation of Holy Cross's American province divided into two provinces: one for priests and the other for brothers. The decision to create distinct provinces had been approved by the congregation's general chapter in 1945, but preparations for the separation began years ear-

11. Walch, *Parish School*, 123–124.

12. Brother Philip R. Smith, C.S.C., "St. Columbkille School, Chicago, Illinois, 1886–97: Early Educators of Edward F. Hoban, Archbishop of Cleveland, Ohio (1945–1966)," Conference on the History of the Congregations of Holy Cross, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, May 30, 2019.

13. Father James T. Connelly, C.S.C., *Basile Moreau and the Congregation of Holy Cross* (Portland, OR: University of Portland, 2007), 35–37.

lier.¹⁴ The relationship between their priests and brothers had occasionally been problematic. As early as 1910, Holy Cross brothers in the United States petitioned for separation from the priests, complaining that they were absorbed into the priests' ministries at the cost of their own.¹⁵ The rather tart rejoinder from Rome was that the Congregation of Holy Cross was a voluntary organization from which members could leave at any time.¹⁶ Although the brothers had ministered in schools for years, the growth of institutions like the University of Notre Dame, Saint Edward's University in Austin, Texas, and Holy Cross College in New Orleans required the brothers to relinquish their own ministries to ensure the success of these larger endeavors.¹⁷ By 1932, however, brothers and priests in the Holy Cross community believed that separation would benefit both. During the congregation's 1938 general chapter, superior general Father James Donahue proposed creating two different societies, but it was considered too radical, and congregation members voted it down decisively. Donahue's successor, Father Albert Cousineau, proposed a more moderate solution: create two provinces in the same congregation.¹⁸ The ratification vote had to wait until the next general chapter, scheduled for 1944 but delayed by the Second World War until 1945.

Holy Cross Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer, who became integral to Bishop Hoban's Cleveland education plans, was an ardent supporter of separation. His position on Holy Cross's general council and his forceful and articulate personality made him a guiding voice in the separation. Born in Ireland, he joined the novitiate of the American province of Holy Cross in 1907. In 1911 his twenty-year career as a teacher and administrator began at high schools run by the Holy Cross community until he was elected to his community's provincial council in 1932, becoming an assistant general of the entire Congregation of Holy Cross in 1938.¹⁹ In this role, Brother Ephrem did not directly serve on committees planning the eventual separation, but he was prolific in offering advice to the brothers who were.

Finance was the most complex issue affecting the division. Treasurer for two years at the University of Notre Dame, Brother Ephrem had a firm grasp of the division's financial issues.²⁰ He shared these with Brothers William

14. Brother Philip Armstrong, C.S.C., *A More Perfect Legacy: A Portrait of Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer, C.S.C., 1888-1978* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 98.

15. Armstrong, *A More Perfect Legacy*, 53.

16. Armstrong, *A More Perfect Legacy*, 46-47.

17. Armstrong, *A More Perfect Legacy*, 51.

18. Armstrong, *A More Perfect Legacy*, 53.

19. Armstrong, *A More Perfect Legacy*, xxi-xxii.

20. Armstrong, *A More Perfect Legacy*, xi.



Ephrem O'Dwyer, C.S.C. (seated right) served as the first provincial of the newly formed Brothers of Holy Cross (Courtesy of the Archives of the Midwest Province of Brothers, Congregation of Holy Cross).

Mang, C.S.C., and Bonaventure Foley, C.S.C., committee members assigned to recommend asset apportionment between the two new provinces. In February 1945 Brother Ephrem wrote an extensive letter to Brother William acknowledging the importance of maintaining the structural integrity of higher education institutions (such as Notre Dame and Saint Edward's in Austin), which composed the majority of the community's financial assets. Rather than seek an equal and proportionate division of assets, Brother Ephrem's proposition started with what the brothers' province needed to thrive. Aside from the ordinary and obvious needs for a formation program, O'Dwyer stressed the importance of establishing what he called "property schools."²¹ Property schools would be institutions owned by the brothers that could act as sources of ministry, income, housing, and vocations for the community. The idea of property schools was not new. In fact, earlier that month Brother William wrote to Brother Ephrem

21. Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer, C.S.C., to Brother William Mang, C.S.C., February 9, 1945, BCSC.

that Notre Dame's current president, Father John Cavanaugh, C.S.C., had spoken favorably of the idea.²² By the time the American province of Holy Cross divided in 1946, the process of acquiring property schools was already underway, and it was here that Bishop Hoban's need for more high schools intersected with the brothers' desire for property schools.

In 1944, even before he became ordinary, Hoban invited the Congregation of Holy Cross to open a high school in the Cleveland diocese.²³ Though it is unclear whether the bishop intended for them to establish a property school, he apparently desired for them to open a boys' high school in Lakewood, a suburb on Cleveland's western border. Correspondence between the brothers preparing for the division indicates that the Cleveland proposal did not then garner much attention. As the prospect of separation grew closer, Brother Ephrem expressed his hope for four property schools: South Bend, Brooklyn, Boston, and Los Angeles. These four schools, along with Holy Cross in New Orleans, could provide a solid foundation for the new community and later enable the brothers' American province to divide again into new provinces in the East, Midwest, and South.²⁴

Arrival in Cleveland

While the Lakewood project was somewhat forgotten, a new possibility emerged in the Cleveland diocese that prompted the Holy Cross congregation to act with relative speed. Cedar Hill Farm was a country estate located in Gates Mills, an exclusive suburb east of Cleveland. Francis Edson Drury, an inventor and industrialist who made his fortune in cooperation with John D. Rockefeller, built the estate in 1927.²⁵ It encompassed 155 acres and featured a Tudor-style mansion of forty-one rooms and seventeen additional buildings, including a creamery and several greenhouses. Drury and his wife lived there only a few years before moving to Augusta, Georgia, but they kept the property functioning.²⁶

By 1945 Cedar Hill Farm was on the market, and two University of Notre Dame alumni explored the site for a paint factory. After touring the

22. Brother William Mang, C.S.C., to Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer, C.S.C., February 4, 1945, BCSC.

23. Father Hugh O'Donnell, C.S.C., to Bishop Edward F. Hoban, March 27, 1944, Archives of the Diocese of Cleveland (hereafter ADC).

24. Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer, C.S.C., to Brother Bonaventure Foley, C.S.C., May 9, 1945, BCSC.

25. *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*, s.v. "Drury, Francis Edson," <https://case.edu/ech/articles/d/drury-francis-edson>.

26. Cleveland Historical, s.v. "Francis E. Drury Mansion," <https://clevelandhistorical.org/items/show/822>.



Cedar Hill Farm just after its completion in 1927. Now known as Tudor House, the building has served Gilmour Academy as dormitory, classroom building, residence for the brothers and most recently, administrative offices (Courtesy of Cleveland Memory Project).

location, Doctors Robert Hartman and Eugene Kanning contacted fellow alumnus Brother Theophane Schmitt, C.S.C., about using the site for a boys' school. At their urging, Brother Theophane visited the property and brought it to the attention of the provincial administration at South Bend.²⁷ In May 1945, four Holy Cross brothers toured the property. Bishop Hoban was very receptive to the idea of a school in Gates Mills, and, although the brothers on the committee were not uniformly enthusiastic about the project itself, all agreed that the site was ideal for a boarding school.²⁸ The province then enlisted another Notre Dame alumnus to assist with the acquisition of Cedar Hill Farm, John P. Murphy, chairman of the Higbees department store chain. He handled negotiations with the Drury estate's trustees and represented the congregation in the property transfer.²⁹ The purchase was announced to the public in July 1945, and Brother Theo-

27. Brother Donald Johnroe, C.S.C., "An Anecdotal History of Gilmour Academy and the Brothers of Holy Cross," Conference on the History of the Congregations of Holy Cross, Austin, Texas, June 4, 1993.

28. Brother William Mang, C.S.C., to Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer, C.S.C., May 6, 1945, BCSC; Brother William Mang, C.S.C., to Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer, C.S.C., May 11, 1945, BCSC.

29. Scenes of the Higbees flagship store can be seen in the 1983 film *A Christmas Story*.

phane and Brother Gonzaga Day arrived by the next month to prepare for the school's opening for the 1946–1947 academic year.³⁰ Theophane as headmaster, Gonzaga as treasurer, and nine other brothers constituted the new school's faculty. In December, speaking to a Communion breakfast for the University of Notre Dame Club, Brother Theophane announced the school's name: Gilmour Academy, in honor of Cleveland's second bishop, Bishop Richard Gilmour. He was known for promoting Catholic education, including the authoring of a Catholic alternative to the McGuffey reader series, which was ubiquitous in early public schools. Opening in September 1946, the academy enrolled young men in eighth and ninth grades, with a grade level added each year until the school's first graduation in 1950.³¹ With Gilmour Academy's establishment, the Brothers of Holy Cross had their first property school in Cleveland.

The University of Notre Dame purchased Cedar Hill Farm for \$150,000.³² The funding source gives cause for speculation. By 1945 the Congregation of Holy Cross knew that the provinces' split was imminent. The Drury estate purchase and appointment of a brother as headmaster clearly indicated that Gilmour Academy would be a ministry for the new province of brothers. In strict terms, the property's purchase should have been funded by the current province rather than by the university. In fact, the university's president, Father John Cavanaugh, C.S.C., felt compelled to announce that he knew of no plans for the university to sponsor a school in Cleveland.³³ In discussing the possible allocation of resources, Brother Ephrem noted that the university accounted for almost 75% of the province's assets.³⁴ Perhaps the purchase by the university was a way to direct liquid assets to the brothers' province.

July 1, 1946, was the first day of existence for the two new provinces of Holy Cross: one for brothers and one for priests. The brothers met in chapter on July 7 and elected Ephrem O'Dwyer as their first provincial. According to O'Dwyer's biographer, Philip Armstrong, the provincial-elect had three goals for his administration. The first was to establish an adequate number of property schools owned and operated by the community. The

30. "Gates Mills Welcomes Plans for School on Drury Estate," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, July 12, 1945, 4.

31. "Call New School Gilmour Academy," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, December 10, 1945, 4.

32. National City Bank of Cleveland, "Escrow Statement for the Drury Estate," November 9, 1945, Archives of the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana.

33. Johnroe, "An Anecdotal History of Gilmour Academy and the Brothers of Holy Cross," 6.

34. Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer, C.S.C., to Brother William Mang, C.S.C., February 9, 1945, BCSC.

second was for the brothers to prove their ability to operate their own institutional ministries independent of the priests. Finally, O'Dwyer envisioned an eventual division of the brothers' province into three jurisdictions.³⁵ This final point would be important: it oriented planning toward simplifying the process of division and thus kept an eye on maintaining a geographic balance of resources and ministries.

All three of O'Dwyer's goals presented challenges for the newly-established province. Owning property schools required financial resources beyond what the brothers had available. In 1946, the community established Gilmour Academy; Notre Dame High School in West Haven, Connecticut; and Notre Dame High School in Sherman Oaks, California. The community's preexisting obligations and these investments depleted the new province's starting funds.³⁶ Although the number of incoming candidates was growing, the community was temporarily pressed to staff their commitments. Finally, the quest for a geographical balance with property schools was complicated by bishops, who might welcome the brothers' teaching ministry but preferred to retain ownership of school properties within their own jurisdictions.

The problems of finance and personnel were apparent in Gilmour Academy's early years. Learning in November 1950 that Brother Theophane hired a lay teacher to fill out his overworked faculty, Brother Ephrem fired off a letter that both chastised the headmaster for taking this initiative and instructed him to terminate the teacher if a brother could be found. O'Dwyer explained that the provincial's prior approval was necessary to hire any lay teacher "even in those schools that can afford to pay a lay teacher."³⁷ Brother Theophane quickly responded that some brothers were so consumed by responsibilities that they had no time to even pray the Divine Office. While acknowledging that he should have asked permission, as local superior he could not allow the brothers to neglect their spiritual lives. He also pointed out that the demands of running a boarding school were more extensive than those of a day school; thus, Gilmour Academy required more personnel than other schools.³⁸

35. Armstrong, *A More Perfect Legacy*, 133–135.

36. Brother William Mang, C.S.C., to Archbishop Edward F. Hoban, January 11, 1955, BCSC.

37. Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer, C.S.C., to Brother Theophane Schmitt, C.S.C., November 22, 1950, BCSC.

38. Brother Theophane Schmitt, C.S.C., to Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer, C.S.C., November 24, 1950, BCSC.



A converted hay barn served as the first gymnasium for Gilmour Academy. The building is still in use, though for other purposes (Courtesy of Gilmour Academy Archives).

Expansion in Cleveland

Although Bishop Hoban warmly embraced Gilmour Academy, it apparently did not fit his philosophy of expanding and streamlining secondary education in the Diocese of Cleveland. The quick establishment of the Gates Mills school resulted from a happy confluence of seemingly unrelated circumstances: the availability of an almost ideal piece of property at a reasonable price, the eager support of local and influential Notre Dame alumni, the brothers' quest to acquire property schools, and not least, the welcome by an ordinary who recognized the value in an unforeseen opportunity. The bishop already had three large high schools for boys in the city: Benedictine High School educated over 1,000 students annually in the southwest portion of the city; the Marianists administered Cathedral Latin near University Circle with 1,100 students; and the Jesuits' Saint Ignatius High School, across the Cuyahoga River in the Ohio City neighborhood, enrolled 935.³⁹

The city of Cleveland's population reached its zenith in 1930, but the suburbs continued to grow. Between 1940 and 1960, Cleveland's population declined slightly as the population of the surrounding Cuyahoga

39. *Official Catholic Directory* (New York: P.J. Kenedy & Sons, 1949), 286–287.

County grew by 14%.⁴⁰ Accordingly, the diocese turned its attention to establishing high schools for the growing suburbs. The Marianist community opened a second high school for boys on Cleveland's eastern border in 1950. Given its location, Saint Joseph High School could draw students from both the city and the suburb of Euclid. In the early 1950s, the Marist fathers began construction of Saint Peter Chanel High School in Bedford, a southern suburb.⁴¹

Bishop Hoban had originally contacted the Congregation of Holy Cross to establish a high school in Lakewood.⁴² In 1949, he renewed that request through Brother Theophane. The diocese had purchased thirteen acres along Detroit Avenue, one of the main western thoroughfares, and Bishop Hoban proposed that the brothers build a school there with diocesan money. When the community paid a certain proportion of the cost, the diocese would cede the property's ownership to them. Whether or not he knew Brother Ephrem's agenda, it was Bishop Hoban who proposed that the brothers take ownership of the school. He believed that ownership of the property would increase Holy Cross's commitment and thus send its "better men" to work in the school.⁴³

Bishop Hoban and Brother Ephrem signed a preliminary agreement in July 1949 for the establishment of a boys' high school in Lakewood by September of that year. Several stipulations in this contract are important. First, the diocese committed to building both a school that would accommodate a minimum of 800 students and a faculty house for the brothers. The brothers agreed to limit tuition to \$100 per student, with future increases requiring the community and diocese's mutual agreement. Once the community paid 25% of the total construction cost (initially estimated to be \$1,500,000), the diocese would sign over the facility's ownership to the brothers; however, the brothers would open the school immediately, using the former Saint Theresa Academy in Lakewood until the new building was ready. In the interim, the diocese assumed financial responsibility for the facility, and the brothers functioned as salaried employees of the diocese.⁴⁴

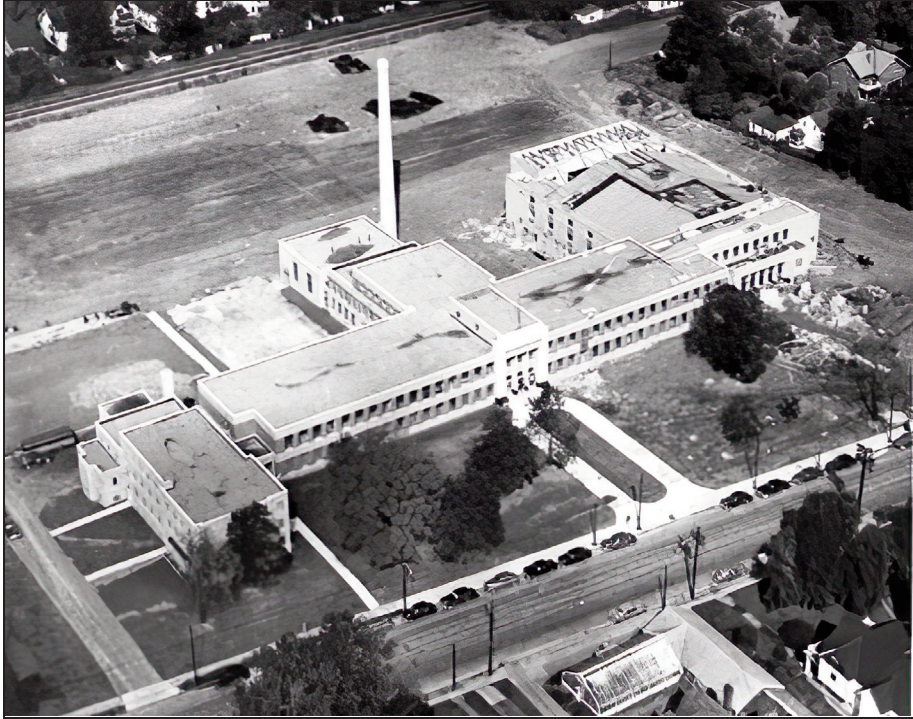
40. Richard Exner, "2010 census population numbers show Cleveland below 400,000; Northeast Ohio down 2.2 percent," March 9, 2011, https://www.cleveland.com/datacentral/2011/03/2010_census_figures_for_ohio_s.html; "Population of Cuyahoga County," <https://population.us/county/oh/cuyahoga-county/>.

41. Father John Krol to Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer, C.S.C., December 1, 1952, BCSC.

42. Father Hugh O'Donnell, C.S.C., to Bishop Edward F. Hoban, March 27, 1944, ADC.

43. Brother Theophane Schmitt, C.S.C., to Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer, C.S.C., July 14, 1949, BCSC.

44. General Proposed Agreement, Edward F. Hoban and Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer, C.S.C., July 19, 1949, BCSC.



Saint Edward High School under construction in 1951 (Courtesy of Cleveland Memory Project).

In August 1949 three Holy Cross brothers: Paul Schwoyer, Regius Gendron, and John William Donaghoe traveled to Lakewood to facilitate the new school's opening. Saint Theresa's facilities consisted of three buildings that were once homes. The largest was brick and held the brothers' living quarters, band room, and cafeteria. One of the smaller frame houses was to be the classroom building. School began in September with 105 students. Each brother taught five class sections, in addition to moderating extracurricular activities. Brother Paul taught English and Latin; Brother Regius taught religion, science, and French; Brother John William taught algebra and religion and was the headmaster and local superior. Brother John established and coached a football team, which went 0–6 in its first season. Bishop Hoban welcomed the brothers by giving them a 1946 Dodge coupe with less than a thousand miles on the odometer. In October the bishop officially named the school Saint Edward High School.⁴⁵

45. Brother Regius Gendron, C.S.C., "Foundation and First Year of St. Edward High School: 1949–1950," undated typescript, BCSC.

The Hoban Plan

The details of the agreement that created Saint Edward High School carried important consequences for the Holy Cross brothers. While the arrangement created the possibility of another property school, another Cleveland location did not foster the geographical diversity Brother Ephrem hoped to cultivate for dividing the brothers' community into separate provinces. The most intriguing element, however, was that the brothers could take ownership for only a quarter of its entire cost—an attractive arrangement for their goal of establishing property schools with limited resources.

In his biography of Brother Ephrem, Philip Armstrong writes that, in consultation with Bishop Hoban, the province developed a fiscal plan for expanding the brothers' school system.⁴⁶ Although the plan does not appear to have been written down, the details can be distilled from financial transactions. Bishop Hoban offered a school at a heavily discounted price, and the community mortgaged a property school to meet that price, paying off the mortgage debt with tuition income. Whether this idea originated with Brother Ephrem or Bishop Hoban or from the two in conversation is unknown. What is apparent from the evidence is that this pattern emerged with Saint Edward High School and continued through the establishment of Archbishop Hoban High School in Akron—and beyond.

In July 1946 Brother Theophane sent Gilmour Academy's deed to Brother Ephrem, explaining that the University of Notre Dame transferred the property as a gift to the new province.⁴⁷ Bishop Hoban informed Brother Ephrem in the summer of 1951 that the brothers could take title to Saint Edward for \$400,000. Whether this amount gave specificity to the original agreement of paying a quarter of the construction cost or replaced the original agreement is unknown, but Brother Ephrem quickly sought the permissions necessary to finalize the purchase.⁴⁸ The community obtained a \$200,000 mortgage on Gilmour to pay the diocese for Saint Edward.⁴⁹ The next year, Brother Theophane assured his provincial that Gilmour Academy's income was sufficient to make the mortgage payments on time.⁵⁰ In a note

46. Armstrong, *A More Perfect Legacy*, 148.

47. Brother Theophane Schmitt, C.S.C., to Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer, C.S.C., July 30, 1946, BCSC.

48. Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer, C.S.C., to Bishop Edward F. Hoban, July 16, 1951, BCSC.

49. Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer, C.S.C., to Brother John William Donaghoe, C.S.C., November 3, 1951, BCSC.

50. Brother Theophane Schmitt, C.S.C., to Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer, C.S.C., April 6, 1952, BCSC.

informing Brother John William that the Gilmour loan had helped pay for Saint Edward, the provincial also explained that the Lakewood facility, now a property school, would be mortgaged for \$400,000. Saint Edward could repay the new mortgage by deriving approximately \$25 from the annual tuition of each of its 1,200 students.⁵¹

A Third School in the Diocese

After Cleveland, the largest city in the diocese was Akron, approximately thirty-five miles to the south. Known as the rubber capital of the world, Akron was headquarters for four major tire companies: Goodyear, Firestone, B.F. Goodrich, and General Tire.⁵² The city had seventeen Catholic parishes, nine of which sponsored primary schools teaching over 3,700 students. Catholic high school education in the city, however, accommodated only about a third of those students. Saint Mary's High School taught 465 students, while Saint Vincent's High School taught 612.⁵³

Monsignor Richard A. Dowd, the pastor of Annunciation Church on Akron's east side, served as Bishop Hoban's agent in the quest to establish a new high school in the area. In 1949 Monsignor Dowd purchased forty-eight acres on Akron's north side, on which stood an old stone house. Bishop Hoban indicated that he wanted to start a high school there by September 1949, so the pastor immediately began making the building habitable and clearing the grounds of debris. Though the school did not come to fruition at that time, Carmelite friars soon occupied the stone house. The Carmelite Province of the Most Pure Heart of Mary had recently established a foundation in nearby Stow, Ohio, and several priests moved onto the property to assist in Akron parishes. Because the friars already administered high schools in the Chicago area, Hoban invited them to open one in Akron.⁵⁴

As with the Lakewood project, the bishop proposed that a high school, with tuition of \$100 per year, be built for approximately \$1,500,000. Given its location, the proposal included an industrial arts curriculum. The Carmelite community countered the proposal: the province would staff the school with both Carmelite priests and outside faculty, whether religious or lay. They would maintain a house for the community and a convent, if

51. Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer, C.S.C., to Brother John William Donaghoe, C.S.C., November 3, 1951, BCSC.

52. University of Akron, "Akron History," <https://www.uakron.edu/psychology/academics/industrial-organizational-psychology/io-graduate-students/akron-history.dot>.

53. *Official Catholic Directory* (New York: P.J. Kenedy & Sons, 1949), 285.

54. State of Ohio Department of Taxation, "Transcript of Proceedings," 1951 (Richard A. Dowd, Pastor of Annunciation Church), 1-5, ADC.

needed for sisters on the faculty. In return, the diocese would fund the facility's construction, including all buildings and athletic fields, but all plans would require the Carmelites' approval. The diocese would then transfer the facility's title to the Carmelites without payment. In addition, the diocese would give the province custody of an Akron parish *in perpetuum*, with an income "commensurate with the work to be done in the high school." Finally, the bishop would require all Akron parishes to provide for the school's ongoing financial support.⁵⁵

The friars' proposal elicited a strong reaction from the diocesan administration. An unsigned memorandum to the diocesan Board of Consultors characterized the proposal as "dangerous," obligating the diocese to future financial obligation at the Carmelites' whim. The writer speculated that the extreme nature of the proposal's demands might actually indicate the province's disinterest in taking on the Akron project.⁵⁶ There followed a quick exchange of letters between Hoban and Father Raffaele Kieffer, the Carmelite provincial. The prelate wrote that he previously invited the community to open a high school, and now, having waited five years for a reply, the order's proposal was unacceptable.⁵⁷ The provincial responded by asking for a counter-proposal, and he mentioned the difficulty of providing an industrial arts curriculum because the friars were better suited for classical and commercial education.⁵⁸ At that point, Hoban looked to other communities to assume responsibility for the Akron school. In his letter to the provincial ending negotiations, the archbishop took pains to mention that two other communities were already building high schools in the diocese—entirely at their own expense.⁵⁹

A month after Hoban ended negotiations with the Carmelites, Monsignor Dowd prevailed upon a Holy Cross priest, Father Regis O'Neil, to inquire of the brothers if they would open a third school in the diocese, this time in Akron.⁶⁰ Brother Ephrem replied that a formal offer might be considered.⁶¹ Within a week Monsignor Dowd invited them to open a school

55. "Proposals and Considerations Regarding A Boys' High School in Akron, Ohio," [1952], ADC.

56. "Matters for the Consultors' Meeting, [February 1952?], ADC.

57. Archbishop Edward F. Hoban to Father Raffaele Kieffer, O.Carm., February 16, 1952, ADC.

58. Father Raffaele Kieffer, O.Carm., to Archbishop Edward F. Hoban, February 28, 1952, ADC.

59. Archbishop Edward F. Hoban to Father Raffaele Kieffer, O.Carm., April 4, 1952, ADC.

60. Father Regis O'Neil, C.S.C., to Brother John William Donaghoe, C.S.C., undated, BCSC.

61. Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer, C.S.C., to Father Regis O'Neil, C.S.C., May 7, 1952, BCSC.

in the Rubber City, hoping the brothers could start a technical school focused on “engineering and other sciences” that could attract support from area industry. Dowed mentioned the archbishop’s intention to invite the brothers himself, but the monsignor seems to have taken the initiative.⁶² Perhaps, given the delays caused by the fruitless negotiations with the Carmelites, Dowed hoped to expedite the process of starting the school. Whatever his reasons, Brother Ephrem quickly responded that the Holy Cross brothers could not accept the proposal for two reasons: a shortage of teachers and the lack of specialized training among the brothers to run a technical school.⁶³

In October 1952, Archbishop Hoban made his own invitation. He traveled personally to the brothers’ South Bend headquarters, carrying the title to Saint Edward High School, which he had signed over to the brothers.⁶⁴ Already in negotiations with Archbishop Thomas Molloy of Brooklyn to establish a property school in the Bayside neighborhood of Queens,⁶⁵ the brothers accepted the offer from Cleveland without any of the reservations communicated to Monsignor Dowed. They even agreed to include specialized classrooms for metal-working, wood-working, and mechanical drawing.⁶⁶ As was the rule, the brothers’ provincial council first consulted the Superior General of the Congregation of Holy Cross before assenting to Hoban’s proposal. The general assessed the plan positively, but he wanted assurance that this new commitment would not interfere with the Bayside project because the New York school would be important for the province’s future division.⁶⁷

Archbishop Hoban’s terms proved more favorable than Archbishop Molloy’s. According to the Brooklyn proposal, the diocese would contribute \$1,500,000 for the new high school’s construction and the brothers would contribute \$500,000. The brothers could take ownership of the school after repaying the diocese’s original investment.⁶⁸ For the Akron school, the

62. Monsignor Richard Dowed to Brother Ephrem O’Dwyer, C.S.C., May 15, 1952, BCSC.

63. Brother Ephrem O’Dwyer, C.S.C., to Monsignor Richard Dowed, May 25, 1952, BCSC.

64. “History of Archbishop Hoban High School, 400 Elbon Avenue, Akron, Ohio,” undated typescript, BCSC.

65. This would eventually become Holy Cross High School in Flushing, New York.

66. Brother Ephrem O’Dwyer, C.S.C., to Archbishop Edward F. Hoban, October 8, 1952, BCSC.

67. Father Christopher O’Toole, C.S.C., to Brother Ephrem O’Dwyer, C.S.C., October 5, 1952, BCSC.

68. Brother Ephrem O’Dwyer, C.S.C., to Brother John Baptist Titzer, C.S.C., December 7, 1952, BCSC.

brothers requested essentially the same terms as those for Saint Edward. The school's cost would be approximately \$1,500,000, and the basic tuition would be \$100 annually per student. One notable difference was that the brothers could take ownership after paying 20% of the building costs—a considerable decrease from the 25% in the Lakewood agreement.⁶⁹ Archbishop Hoban's terms prove his regard for the congregation, an esteem perhaps not shared by all chancery officials. When negotiating with Brother Ephrem on the Akron agreement's finer points, the chancellor of the Cleveland diocese, Monsignor John Krol, took pains to communicate that the Marist Fathers were building a high school in Bedford at their own expense.⁷⁰

In April 1952 Brother Ephrem wrote Brother John William Donaghoe, principal at Saint Edward, about mortgaging the school once the brothers took title from the diocese. He mentioned that he had no notion of increasing the mortgage beyond the \$400,000 needed to recoup the expense of assuming ownership, but circumstances changed once the brothers agreed to start the school in Akron.⁷¹ In August 1953 Brother Ephrem wrote Brother John William again, instructing him that the mortgage was raised to \$800,000 to cover the Akron school's costs as well.⁷² Just as Gilmour Academy was mortgaged to fund Saint Edward, the Lakewood school would assume an additional mortgage to finance the Akron initiative.

In the original contract for Saint Edward, Hoban specified that annual tuition per student not exceed \$100, and the same stipulation was made for Akron's new school, to be named Archbishop Hoban High School.⁷³ Assuming that the new school would eventually take over its half of the \$800,000 adjusted mortgage, the Akron school required an enrollment equal to Lakewood, with the same \$25 per student's tuition used for payment. Although Archbishop Hoban High School opened in 1953, by 1955 total enrollment was only 250, which created a roadblock in the so-called Hoban Plan of mortgaging one property to acquire the next. While Saint Edward's full classrooms could pay the total mortgage if the Akron school could not pull its financial weight, the brothers' steady march of expansion

69. Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer, C.S.C., to Archbishop Edward F. Hoban, October 8, 1952, BCSC.

70. Monsignor John Krol to Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer, C.S.C., December 1, 1952, BCSC.

71. Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer, C.S.C., to Brother John William Donaghoe, C.S.C., April 16, 1952, BCSC.

72. Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer, C.S.C., to Brother John William Donaghoe, C.S.C., August 29, 1953, BCSC.

73. Archbishop Edward F. Hoban to Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer, C.S.C., June 1, 1953, BCSC.



Archbishop Edward F. Hoban dedicates the Akron high school named in his honor, March 22, 1956 (Courtesy of *Akron Beacon Journal*).

might grind to a halt. In response, Brother Ephrem wrote to Hoban, seeking a tuition increase to raise revenue. He shared annual tuition rates at other Holy Cross schools: \$125 in South Bend and \$228 in Chicago. He concluded, however, by conceding: “I know you are convinced that your method of providing high schools for your diocese is both economical and efficient. . . . May you be pleased with the efforts of the Brothers of Holy Cross.”⁷⁴ Despite the rocky start for Archbishop Hoban High, the school eventually was filled with young men, reaching its peak enrollment of 1,200 in 1964.⁷⁵

Conclusion

By the beginning of the 1966–1967 school year, Archbishop Edward F. Hoban’s life was nearing its end. In the final years of his administration, he

74. Brother Ephrem O’Dwyer, C.S.C., to Archbishop Edward F. Hoban, January 11, 1955, BCSC.

75. Mary Anne Beiting, “A Case Study: Archbishop Hoban High School’s Journey to Coeducation (Ph.D. diss., University of Akron, 2005), 29.

launched yet another initiative to expand Catholic high school education.⁷⁶ His coadjutor bishop, Clarence G. Issenmann, continued the expansion as the archbishop lived out his final years. Edward F. Hoban died on September 22, 1966, at a time when all three Holy Cross schools in the Cleveland diocese were thriving. In 1966 Saint Edward High School was home to 39 brothers teaching 1,650 students. The 1,200 students at Archbishop Hoban were taught by 37 brothers, and Gilmour Academy reported an enrollment of 234 students and a faculty of 20 brothers. That year the Holy Cross brothers educated more high school students than any other religious community in the Diocese of Cleveland.⁷⁷

In 1956 the Brothers of Holy Cross split into three vice-provinces. This division effectively ended Brother Ephrem's tenure as provincial. During his time in office, he initiated the establishment of ten secondary schools distributed across the three eventual provinces.⁷⁸ He chose to affiliate with the eastern vice-province, which immediately elected him to leadership as vice-provincial. After six years he was succeeded by Brother John William Donaghoe, the first principal of Saint Edward. Brother Ephrem continued to work in education until he returned to South Bend in 1974 to live at Dujarie House, an infirmary maintained for brothers from all three provinces. He died peacefully at age ninety on August 21, 1978.⁷⁹

Though the number of brothers has diminished considerably, all three of their schools in the Cleveland diocese continue the Holy Cross tradition. In 1973 Archbishop Hoban High School opened its doors to women and today enrolls 800 students. In 1982 Gilmour Academy became coeducational after merging with neighboring Glen Oak, an all-women's school staffed by the Religious (Madams) of the Sacred Heart. Today, Gilmour is a pre-kindergarten through twelfth-grade school with over 600 students. Saint Edward High School, with over 900 students, remains male-only and overcame its first winless season to become a perennial powerhouse in high school football. All three schools stand as testaments to the ability, determination, and mutual trust of two men who valued Catholic education: Archbishop Edward F. Hoban and Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer.

76. Board of Education, Catholic Diocese of Cleveland, "Statement of His Excellency Clarence E. Elwell, Auxiliary Bishop, Vicar General for Education," September 14, 1967, ADC.

77. *Official Catholic Directory* (New York: P.J. Kenedy & Sons, 1966), 406–407.

78. Armstrong, *A More Perfect Legacy*, 305.

79. Armstrong, *A More Perfect Legacy*, 311–313.

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