

# Barquilla de la Santa Maria

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May 15, Centennial of Rerum Novarum

May, 1991



Pope Leo XIII (1810-1903)

Author of *Rerum Novarum*, with the help of Cardinal Francesco Zigliara and the help and influence of Cardinals Mermillod of Switzerland, Gibbons of the United States, and Manning of England and Archbishop Walsh of Dublin.

## JOHN KANE:

### RELATING RERUM NOVARUM TO THE UNITED MINE WORKERS OF AMERICA

On the western edge (1) of section D in the Cathedral Division of Columbus Mount Calvary Cemetery stands a tall monument marking the resting places of "John Kane, born May 21, 1859, died July 19, 1897, aged 38Y 1M 28D." and of "Rebekah, wife of John Kane, born 1865, died Nov. 7, 1897, aged 33 y'rs." That which catches the notice of the passer-by, however, is the inscription, "Erected to the memory of John & Mrs. Kane by the United Mine Workers of America. 1898. May they rest in peace." Why, one wonders, was this monument erected by the national coal miners' union? The answer to that question is the story of a Catholic mining union activist. What makes the

story most interesting, however, is the influence which John Kane held in the union at the particular time when the Church, his Church, through the first papal "social encyclical" embarked upon its effort to guide modern society to justice, one hundred years ago this month.

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By the middle of the nineteenth century, immigrant miners, predominately from Great Britain, began arriving in the coal fields of America, fields previously worked rather unprofessionally by American farmers. These newcomers made two contributions to the young mining industry: the first was improved working techniques; the second was an attitude leading to national organization.

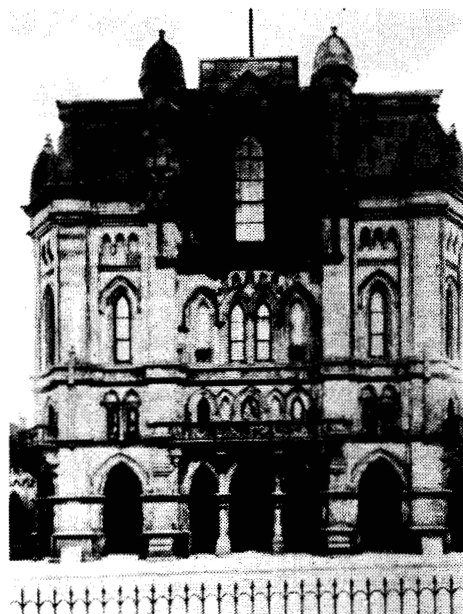
The bearded, burly men who settled in Northern Illinois, the coal camps in the Hocking Valley and around the collieries in Pennsylvania were proud of their skills with the picks and drill, a little amazed at the headlong manner with which our miners tore at the coal. Already the shafts in the mother country were going deep and would go deeper soon. The cream of the outcroppings overseas had been taken, and as the shafts went down the working skills went up. Sir Humphry Davy's safety lamp had taken the place of candles thrust into crevices in the mine walls. Hoisting and pumping machinery had steadily improved, and safer and more ingenious ways of robbing the coal were devised by British engineers and miners alike.

The British miners began to organize into associations and societies at Durham, England as early as 1825. By 1831 they were represented in the first British national labor organization and they had their own national miners' organization by 1841. Their experiences in the economic and political arenas gave the immigrant British miners the sense of the need for solidarity which was lacking among Americans. (2)

It was within the above-described milieu that John Kane lived and then migrated to America. He was a native of the county of Durham, in northern England, a son of an Irish-born coal miner. Early in life John took up his work in the mines of Durham but in 1881 he sought to improve his condition by migrating to America. With his wife, likewise an Irish native of Durham, he settled in Duggar, Indiana and resumed his occupation. He soon became prominent in the local miners' union and in 1890 he was elected President of the Indiana State Miners' Association. (3)

All through the 1880s the coal miners were struggling to form a national union. One of the early national unions, the Almagamated Association of Miners of the United States, was organized in 1883, but it could not survive the long and bitter Hocking Valley strike of 1884 and 1885. A new national, the National Federation of Miners and Mine Laborers (later renamed the National Progressive Union of Miners and Mine Laborers), was organized in Indianapolis in 1885 and in 1886 it became affiliated with the new American Federation of Labor. Still, this was not a truly national union, for it operated in competition with National District Assembly No. 135 of the Knights of Labor. "...there followed four years of disastrous internecine strife. The struggle for jurisdiction, the running sore of the labor movement, set brother against brother, kept the rank and file in anxious turmoil, vastly enheartened the more reactionary among the operators. Conferences between leaders of the rival groups broke up in bitter wrangling." (4) Conferences behind closed doors went on all through the year 1889 until the situation was resolved at a meeting in Columbus in January of 1890.

The choice of Columbus as birthplace of the United Mine Workers was probably due in a large part to geography and in a small way to some recent, successful negotiations. Columbus was central to the mining regions of Pennsylvania, West Virginia, the Hocking Valley, and Indiana and Illinois. As a railroad center, it was a convenient meeting place for representatives from the various districts. The K of L miners' union located its offices here in the mid-1880s. In addition, Ohio had the strongest state miners' organization. The recent, successful negotiations which may have given Columbus an aura of good will had taken place in 1885, when union leaders and progressive mine operators had put the bitterness of the Hocking Valley strike behind them and signed the first interstate wage agreement covering Ohio, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, and West Virginia. (5)



Old City Hall

The call for the successful national union convention was made at a convention of John Kane's Indiana district of the National Progressive Union in December of 1889. Kane was one of the three N.P.U. representatives who met with K of L counterparts to arrange for the unity convention. When the full delegations of the two unions met in the Columbus City Hall (on the present site of the Ohio Theatre), on January 22 through 25, 1890, Kane played another important part. A resolution to unite was passed on January 23 but, as reported in the Columbus Dispatch, "the prospects for a permanent amalgamation" hinged on agreement to the "all-important" constitution for the new organization. Kane was one of the six members of the constitution committee, who worked from 8 p.m. on January 23 until 3 a.m. the next morning to hammer out a proposal. After heated discussion, the constitution was adopted by the convention on January 25. On the same day, in one of its last acts, the convention elected John Kane to membership on the first executive board of the United Mine Workers of America. (6)



The Clinton Building

The new union's goals were: payment in lawful money rather than company scrip, the prohibition of child labor, adequate safety laws, arbitration of disputes, and an eight-hour working day. (7) However, the new union represented only 17,000 of the 200,000 coal miners in the country (8) and its early work came down to one job: organizing the miners.

Columbus remained the home of the union. Its offices were in the

Clinton Building (at the northeast corner of Chestnut & High) where the K of L miners' union offices had been prior to the formation of the new national union. Its annual conventions were held in the City Hall and later in Wirthwein's Hall (in the Wirthwein Block, 335 to 339 S. High).

In response to a resolution passed at the second annual convention, on April 16, 1891 the first edition of the union's weekly newspaper, the United Mine Workers Journal, appeared. It would be published in Columbus until 1898 and in its early days it was supported largely by the advertising of Columbus businesses. It was intended "to be a fearless advocate, devoted exclusively to the interests of mine workers, to be dauntless, fearless, truthful in presentation of facts and figures; open and fair in discussion; and yet stern and uncompromising in advocating the right." (9) John Kane was appointed editor of the UMW Journal, effective November 1, 1891. (10) As such he moved from Indiana to Columbus. His and Rebekah's residences during their sojourn here were at 415 Neil (1892), 1091 Oak St. (1894), and 501 Lexington Avenue. His salary in 1895 was \$900, much higher than an average miner's, but still less than that of the President of the union. By that time the union had recognized that, though born in poverty and comparatively uneducated, his great knowledge of mining affairs and his ability to use it had placed their weekly in the front rank of labor newspapers in the country.

Although Rerum Novarum was issued on May 15, 1891, the first editor of the UMW Journal, preceeding Kane, pretty well ignored this effort of Pope Leo XIII. An editorial of June 11, 1891 mentioned the capital vs. labor controversy, but only in the uneven light of the growth of the Socialistic Labor Party in Pennsylvania and the unbalanced solution to the problem offered by that party. "The tyranny of capital, supported by class legislation, and the purchased sympathy of sworn officers of the law, has become unendurable," the editor wrote. "The oppressed laborers propose to seek redress at the ballot box. It is already claimed the balance of power is held by the Socialistic Labor Party in cert[ain dis]tricts and that it proposes to use its influence to secure the election of legislators friendly to the labor interests." Two weeks later, this editor noted "the attention the leading magazines of all civilized countries are giving to the labor question. During May and June about twenty of the most prominent of the American, English, French and German monthlies have had leading articles on some phase of the question. This is all the more noteworthy, as until within the last few years it was but seldom they had anything to say." He ascribed this activity to "the increasing power of the various labor organizations, and the progress they are making." Not a word or a nod to the Holy Father. Finally, on July 16, a summary of the encyclical appeared, which was taken from The Christian Union, a New York newspaper. "The pope says:" the paper quoted, "That there is a labor problem. That workmen are suffering under gross injustice. That it is the duty of the church to concern itself with these facts. That wealth is a trust and must be administered as a trust. That hours of labor should be such as to give time for soul-culture. That wages should be such as to give opportunity for acquisition of property. That, if these results cannot be secured by contract, the law should interfere. That labor arbitration should take the place of labor battles. That labor organization should be encouraged. That woman labor and child labor should be regulated and reduced by legislation. That the factory acts are right in principle. That the church, the state, free labor organizations and capitalists should all co-operate in labor reform."

Rerum Novarum, as its 11,250 words were originally written, can be divided into five parts. The first part deals with the social question, rejection of socialism, and establishment of the right to private property. This right is based on four natural-law arguments, namely (a) man's power of self-direction, (b) his personal independence, (c) his mastery of his own energies, and (4) his right to found a family and his duty to care for it. The second and third parts deal with the teaching role of the Church in social affairs and social action. The fourth part outlines the role of the state, and the fifth emphasizes the beneficial activity of voluntary organizations, such as trade unions and Church bodies devoted to social action. (11) The moral rights and duties of the four groups involved can be summarized as follows:

- The Church: forms minds and consciences; counsels justice and charity as the solution of inevitable inequalities; insists on moral rights and duties and eternal values.
- The state: provides for private and public well-being; maintains distributive justice; protects the moral and spiritual interests of citizens, especially workers; regulates, as far as necessary, relations between employers and employees.
- Employers: respect human personality; adjust work to individual capacity; pay just wages; avoid direct and indirect exploitation of workers; provide an environment conducive to health and morality.
- Employees: perform the work agreed upon; respect the person and property of the employer; use only just means to obtain their rights.

The letter proposes norms for just wages and defends workers' right to organize. (12)

Almost immediately upon John Kane's appointment as editor, the UMW Journal began looking to various representatives of religion, not just the Church, for direction and guidance in the relations between capital and labor. On November 26, Kane reported some remarks of Presbyterian minister James McGaw of Toledo, the gist of which was, "The employee is entitled to a just and equitable reward for his toil; the employer is morally bound to pay no less and he is not bound to pay more. You say this still leaves the question unsettled as to what is just and equal. That is true; but it settles the general principle, and then we can go on and make the application." On December 3, Rev. Morgan M. Sheedy, pastor of St. Mary of Mercy Catholic parish in Pittsburgh, was quoted. Among his remarks were that wrong means should not be employed by the unions to gain their ends, and that if both Catholic and Protestant ministers who had studied the labor question would take up the matter from the pulpit, much could be done toward bettering the condition of laboring people. He had copies of the encyclical to distribute, "and I think the labor question is as fully explained in it as any man could wish."

(To be concluded)

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NOTES

- 1) Lot 136-D, south half.
- 2) Coleman, McAlister, Men and Coal; New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1943; pp 34-35.
- 3) Columbus Dispatch, July 20, 1897; UMW Journal, July 22, 1897; Catholic Columbian, July 24, 1897.
- 4) Coleman, page 51.
- 5) Ibid., page 50.
- 6) Columbus Dispatch, Jan. 23 through Jan. 27, 1890.

- 7) Coleman, pages 54-55.
- 8) Boryczka, Raymond and Lorin Lee Cary, No Strength without Union: An Illustrated History of Ohio Workers, 1803-1980; Columbus: Ohio Historical Society, 1982; pages 129-130.
- 9) UMW Journal, Apr. 16, 1891.
- 10) UMW Journal, Feb. 11, 1892, page 1.
- 11) McGraw-Hill, New Catholic Encyclopedia, 12/387.
- 12) Carlen, Sr. Mary Claudia, I.H.M., Directory of Papal Pronouncements, Leo XIII to Pius XII; New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1958; pages 139-140 (No. 633).

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MT. CALVARY CEMETERY, COLUMBUS  
 CATHEDRAL DIVISION LOT RECORDS, 1867-1926?  
 and Tombstone Inscriptions  
 (continued from Vol. XV, Number 10)

page 342, Mrs. Eliza Bray, 281 Mt. Vernon Ave., transferred from half of lot 41-H to north half of lot 16-B, Nov. 2, 1888; graves: Nov. 2, 1888; Oct. 29, 1889 (transfer); Mar. 9, 1901; Nov. 23, 1907; Mar. 20, 1927.

Jose, wife of William S. Heyer, died Nov. 23, 1907.

page 360, Thomas J. Bergin jr., half of lot 77-B, purchased Apr. 6, 1891(?); graves: March 18, 1891 (child); Apr. 16, 1891 (child); --- 21, 1891 (child). [This lot adjoins lot 92-B, also a Bergin lot, of which no record was found in the old lot ledger; all tombstones on the lots are given here:]

Mary Curran Bergin, Apr. 14, 1863 - Dec. 16, 1928.  
 Thomas J. Bergin, Sept. 28, 1862 - Sept. 1, 1943.  
 Catherine M. Murphy, 1903 + 1983  
 In memory of Bridget Kavanagh, Native of CarrowM'Conolly, Queen's County, Ireland, died May 11, 1870, aged 43 years.  
 Alice Caren Hasbrook, July 9, 1889 - July 15, 1915.  
 Margaret Kelly, 1854 - 1933.  
 Mary A. Kelly, 1852 - 1934.  
 Paul Bergin Murphy, Apr. 23, 1907 - June 8, 1978.  
 Margaret J. Murphy, May 14, 1911 - June 24, 1972.  
 Josephine B. Murphy, 1901 + 1986.  
 Mary Bergin Murphy, June 10, 1871 - Aug. 3, 1952.  
 (Mother) Died Oct. 21, 1892, aged 60 years.  
 (Father) Thomas Bergin, died Dec. 24, 1897, aged 68Y 1M 20D.  
 Marguerite Caren, June 27, 1885 - May 7, 1907.

page 392, Michael Heavey, 59 Lincoln St., west half of lot 28-B, purchased from J. F. Murray, Feb. 24, 1894 [Murray had purchased the lot in 1870]; graves: Feb. 26, 1894; Feb. 14, 1899; Dec. 13, 1909; May 16, 1911.

(Father) Wilfred T. Eckenrode, Died Dec. 12, 1909, aged 36 years.  
 Heavey Family / Eckenrode Family

page 378, Charles Ebrod, 111 Spruce St., west half of lot 122-B, purchased May 21, 1892; grave: May 21, 1892 (child). [no tombstones]

page 475, Mrs. Hannah O'Donnell, north half of lot 66-B, transferred from Ellen McMahon, Nov. 26, 1907; grave: Nov. 26, 1907. [no tombstones]

page 394, Perry Wall, 84 E. Goodale, [east] half of lot 122-B transferred to him by J. Hunter on July 23, 1894, one grave reserved; graves: July 23, 1894 (child); Oct. 19, 1897, Mrs. Hanlon; May 6, 1924. [See Vol. XIII, page 93 for the Hunter tombstone.]

page 407, Daniel Garrigan, 291 E. Spring, half of lot 135-B transferred to him from John Duffy, May 30, 1895; graves: May 30, 1895; Dec. 10, 1898; Jan. 7, 1910; July 2, ----.

In memory of Eliza, Bridget, Ann, and Daniel Gargan.  
William Callahan, 1855 + 1923  
Mary Sheridan his wife, 1862 + 1917  
At Rest.

page 411, James Byrne, 43 DeKota [Dakota] Ave., south half of lot 106-B, purchased Dec. 11, 1899 [from John Scanlon]; graves: Dec. 11, 1899 (child); June 7, 1913.

BYRNE: James F., 1865 + 1933 (Father)  
Francis J., 1895 + 1899 (Son)  
Jennie, 1870 + 1947 (Mother)  
HOLTSCHULTE: (Father) Leo J., 1886 - 1956  
(Mother) Katherine M., 1888 - 1934.

page 421, Mrs. Anna Hickey, 213 Jefferson, three graves in the northeast quarter of lot 106-B, May 15, 1901 [purchased from William Scanlan]; graves: May 15, 1901; March 5, 1906; Jan. 15, 1921. [no tombstones]

page 431, William B. Cassidy, 760 Henry St., Case Elk Heater Co., unused portion of lot 113-B, purchased July 29, 1902; graves: July 29, 1902; Apr. 19, 1909. [no tombstones]

page 443, Daniel Cannon, 616 W. Chapel, four graves in lot 121-B, purchased Jan. 4, 1904; graves: Jan. 4, 1904; June 1, 1916; Dec. 4, 1920; Apr. 29, 1929. [no tombstones]

page 453, Daniel R. Mahoney, 1143 Hamlet St., west half of lot 107-B, purchased July 1, 1904; graves: Mar. 18, 1905 (moving two bodies); Sept. 17, 1927.

(Mamma) Mary, wife of Daniel P. Mahoney, died July 5, 1904, aged 24 years.  
Gone but not forgotten.  
(Son) Cornelius D. Mahoney, 1904 + 1927 At Rest  
In loving memory of Daniel P. Mahoney, Feb. 5, 1878 - May 25, 1941.  
In loving memory of (Mother) Anna M. Mahoney, Aug. 31, 1879 - July 16, 1955.

page 469, Mrs. George E. Eberle, 762 Mt. Vernon Ave., one-fourth of lot 129-B, purchased Apr. 5, 1907; grave: Apr. 5, 1907.

George E. Eberly, Sr., 1874 - 1907.  
George E. Eberly, Jr., 1906 - 1922.  
Lena Eberly, 1877 - 1954.

(To be continued)

DONATIONS AND ACQUISITIONS FOR THE SOCIETY'S LIBRARY

Pilgrims All: A History of St. Augustine Parish, Minster, Ohio, by Louis A. Hoying, Rita M. Hoying, and David A. Hoying, C.PP.S.; Minster: 1982.  
- gift of Rev. David Hoying, C.PP.S.

Memorial cards of the following priests: Revs. T. J. O'Reilly, W. T. Rardin, J. J. Soltis, J. J. Hartley, J. J. Foley, R. F. Coburn, J. R. Casey, J. A. Cousins, E. S. Berry, and S. P. Weisinger.  
- gift of Rita Marzluf Stai

Doyle, Mary E., Standard Catholic Readers, by Grades: Sixth Year, New York: American Book Co., 1913.  
The New Fifth Reader of the Catholic National Series; New York: Benziger Brothers, 1894.  
Columbus St. Aloysius Parish, 1956 Golden Jubilee booklet.  
Shea, John Gilmary, The Life of Pope Pius IX; New York: Thomas Kelly, 1878.  
The Columbian Jubilee of Four Centuries of Catholicity in America; Chicago: J. S. Hyland & Co. (2 vols.) 1892.  
- anonymous donations

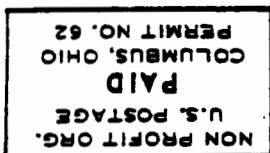
Photographs of Revs. A. O. Walker, O.P. and J. Dolley.  
Remember, Rejoice, Renew: Sisters of Notre Dame in the United States, 1840-1990, being Vol. 11, No. 2 (Nov. 1989) of Response, published by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, Ohio Province.  
The Tower, Vol. IV, No. 1 (Autumn, 1939), published by St. Mary of the Springs College.  
Program for the Closing Exercises of Notre Dame Academy for Boys, Columbus, June 16, 1922.  
- gifts of Marian Swickard

McKittrick, James R., The Monroe County [Ohio] Dougherty Clan; privately printed, 1989.  
American Catholic Historical Researches, Vols. II (1886), III (1887), V (1887), VI (1888), and XV (1898).  
Schlegel, Donald M., Irish Genealogical Abstracts from the Londonderry Journal, 1772-1784; Baltimore: Clearfield Pub. Co., 1990.  
- gifts of D. M. Schlegel

Packet of parish mission materials, ca 1888-1901.  
Josephinum booklet, ca 1932.  
- gifts of Ruth Garber Hawk

A large photograph album from ca 1950, with many photographs of priests of the diocese and other items of interest.  
- gift of Rev. Robert Harwick

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197 E. Gay Street Columbus, Ohio 43215 Donald M. Schlegel, editor  
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