

# **Father O'Shea's Diocesan Reflections**

## **Bonaventure Broderick**

### **Death and Resurrection**

#### **Early life**

Born in Hartford, Connecticut on December 25, 1868. He graduated from high school and worked in a paper mill awhile. A graduate of St. Charles College, Maryland in 1891, he then went to the North American College in Rome.

At that time tensions between the Vatican and key members of the United States hierarchy were very visible over the rapidly growing desire for American ecclesiastical independence. The Vatican was fearful of this, although most of the American bishops were on the Vatican's side. In 1893 the first Apostolic Delegate to the USA was appointed against the wishes of many Americans.

In 1896 Bonaventure Broderick was ordained a priest in Rome, having also merited a Doctorate in Philosophy. The following year he received a Doctorate in Theology. Back in Hartford, Father Broderick was appointed to the prep seminary there. In 1900 he was named English-speaking secretary to the Bishop of Havana. The following year he was transferred from Havana to the Apostolic Delegation in Manila. In 1903, at age 35, he was appointed auxiliary Bishop of Havana.

#### **Death**

In 1905 Bishop Broderick resigned as Havana's auxiliary, seemingly over Cuban-American tensions and maybe because of close ties with his wealthy brother who was doing business there in a big way. That year he was named auxiliary Bishop of Baltimore but Cardinal Gibbons would not accept him. In short, Broderick was offered a pension of a hundred dollars a year from the Holy See and set adrift.

That year (1905) the young Bishop Broderick returned to the United States, more or less an exile, and settled in Millbrook, NY, a town with a population of 1200. There he purchased a small dwelling and a gas station, living entirely as a lay business man for the next thirty years plus.

In 1939 Francis Spellman was installed as Archbishop of New York. A short time later he drove to Millbrook, left his car at the bottom of the hill and walked up to Broderick's modest

home. Spellman graciously introduced himself and stated that he had come to Millbrook to see if there was anything he could do for him. Broderick in lay clothes and now in tears, told Spellman he had been waiting for over thirty years for someone to say these words to him. He then told the archbishop his story of 34 years in exile, of the hurt and humiliation he had first encountered after his departure from Cuba and how his intentions had been misunderstood, even by Pope Pius X. He then showed Spellman the correspondence between him and Pius X, Cardinal Gibbons and other Vatican officials. Archbishop Spellman stated that his officials had investigated all this and found Broderick to be true.

### **Resurrection**

That day Archbishop Spellman stated that he had been given full authority by Pope Pius XII to reinstate him and asked Broderick if he was willing to return to his duties as a priest. After sufficient dialogue in that modest house on the hill, Spellman appointed Bishop Bonaventure Broderick, PhD, STD, as chaplain to the Frances Schervier Hospital in Riverside, New York, effective December 1, 1939. Thus, at age 71, Broderick left Millbrook in the same quiet manner as he had arrived there 34 years earlier.

Perhaps the happiest years of his life were these four years as chaplain to the 40 Franciscan Sisters of the Poor. In addition, the archbishop soon appointed Broderick as Vicar of Religious for the archdiocese.

Bishop Broderick died of heart failure in November of 1943, aged 75 and shortly after Archbishop Spellman had administered to him the sacrament of the sick. Pontifical Mass took place in St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York in the presence of a full church of laity, nuns, 150 priests and fifteen bishops. The sermon was given by Auxiliary Bishop Francis MacIntyre (later Archbishop of Los Angeles). Burial of Bishop Broderick took place in Gate of Heaven Cemetery, Westchester, NY, in a simple grave among these Franciscan Sisters of the Poor as was his wish.

(Notes from Archives, Archdiocese of New York, 2015)

***O death, where is your sting?  
Death is swallowed up in victory.***

(1 Cor. 15, 54-55)

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