



Bishop John P. Treacy
1946-1964

THE DIOCESE OF LA CROSSE SESQUICENTENNIAL



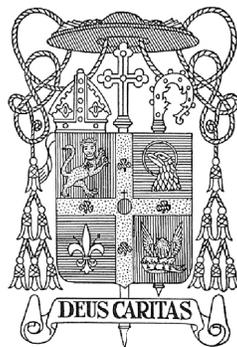
Fifth BISHOP OF LA CROSSE

John P. Treacy was born July 23, 1891 to John and Ann Margaret O’Kane Treacy of Marlboro, MA. An only child he received his early education at Holy Cross Prep and Holy Cross College for two years in Worcester, MA. He graduated from the Catholic University of America in 1912 and entered St. John’s Seminary in Brighton, MA. He was ordained for the Cleveland diocese on December 8, 1918 by Bishop John P. Farrelly. and served in parishes in Akron and Cleveland. He was the Cleveland Diocesan Director of the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith for 14 years and a member of the United States Social Service Commission. On August 22, 1945 he was notified that he had been appointed Coadjutor-Bishop of La Crosse with right of succession and was installed on November 5, 1945. Upon his arrival in La Crosse, he served for a brief time as pastor of Blessed Sacrament parish. He assumed full governance of the diocese in 1946. It was also that year that the Madison diocese was established. Bishop Treacy noticed that many of the priests serving in the diocese were not native sons and his desire to build a seminary was soon to be a reality. On August 31, 1944 Bishop McGavick had signed a contract with the Cincinnati firm of Edward J. Schulte to build a new cathedral on the corner of Main and 5th Street. Plans had been drawn and submitted, but it was during war torn years, and financially it was not feasible to undertake such a project.

Bishop Treacy became aware of Schulte’s plans and contacted him to design a seminary. In his unpublished autobiography Schulte described him thus: “Bishop Treacy was an unusual combination of a ‘praying’ and a ‘building’ bishop, and the seminary and cathedral which I subsequently designed ... shall remain as lasting

monuments to his dedicated career in Christian leadership.” Ground was broken in October, 1948. In September, 1951 it was dedicated. Over the next few years he continued to build throughout the diocese and became known as the “brick and mortar” bishop. In 1955 he convened the Third Synod of the Diocese of La Crosse. At the fall clergy conference in 1956 he presented his plan to build a new cathedral which was built and dedicated on May 14, 1962 during a week long celebration. He attended the first two sessions of Vatican II but poor health prevented him from traveling to others and he died in office October 11, 1964.

Bishop Treacy’s coat of arms contains the traditional symbols of the office of bishop, the Roman(gallero) hat with twelve tassels, miter, crozier, and processional cross. The lower right and upper left quadrants have a blue background in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The lower right contains a fleur-de-leis in her honor. The upper left depicts an eagle symbolizing eternal vision, in honor St. John the Evangelist, the patron saint of Bishop Treacy. The other two are family related. In the upper right is a Catamount symbolizing the fearless nature of the Treacy family wearing a crown of his royal ancestry and a trefoil on the shoulder in honor of St. Patrick, his secondary patron. A chapeau, an ancient Irish cap with ermine is from his mother’s lineage.



The wings and shell seen above the chapeau symbolize ideals and apostolic zeal. In the center is the world surmounted by the cross signifying his association with the Propagation of the Faith. The opposite upper and lower quadrants are red for faith, valor, and divine love. His motto: *Deus Caritas--God is Love.*