

June at the Museum!



John F. Kennedy at the family homestead in New Ross, 1963.

June is a very busy month here at the Museum and we have a variety of different events and speakers planned. There are also several significant anniversaries in June that honor Irish and Irish-American history:

In June 1859, the richest known silver deposit in the U.S. was discovered in Nevada by two Irish laborers, Peter O'Reilly and Patrick McLaughlin. A fellow miner, Henry Comstock, stumbled on their find and persuaded O'Reilly and McLaughlin that it was his property. Patrick McLaughlin sold his interest to his claims to for \$3,500, which he soon lost in various business ventures. Peter O'Reilly went on to sell his interests for \$40,000, and went on to explore other mining ventures in the area. He eventually lost everything and was declared insane. He was sent to an asylum in California where he died. Ironically, Comstock sold prematurely for \$ 11,000. The lode produced more than \$500 million worth of silver, a large share of which went to the Irish-American Big Four: James Flood, William O'Brien, James Fair and John Mackay. Comstock continued prospecting in Idaho and Montana, but had no success in finding

any more gold or silver. In 1870, while prospecting in Montana, he used his own pistol to commit suicide.

The Battle of Vicksburg, fought from May 18-July 4th 1863 was a major siege in the western theater of operations that together with the Battle of Gettysburg (which was fought at the same time in the East) was considered a major turning point in the Civil War. The capture of Vicksburg ultimately led to the Confederacy being split into two, cutting off the western Confederate states of Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas from the rest of the Confederacy. The Civil War ended on June 22nd, 1865. Irish fought on both sides in this conflict, with about 200,000 serving in some form. The "Fighting Irish" became a household name!

On June 27th 1905, Western miners and other activists form the Industrial Workers of the World at a convention in Chicago. The IWW, or Wobblies, was one of the most radical of all organized labor groups. Though they achieved only limited success in moving their agenda forward, they will inspire generations of labor activists with their militant spirit. Mother Jones, James Connolly, and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn are associated with the Wobblies.

On Thursday, June 13, 1912, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, and a group of suffragettes, smashed windows in Dublin Castle to highlight the "woman's right to vote" cause. It was an offense for which she would spend a month in prison. 106 years later to the day, near to the windows that were smashed, President Michael D. Higgins unveiled a plaque honoring Sheehy Skeffington's efforts in the struggle for Irish independence, and women's suffrage.

Sheehy Skeffington co-founded the Irish Women's Franchise League, and fought for justice after her husband, Francis Sheehy Skeffington, was shot and killed during the 1916 Easter Rising by a British Army patrol. President Higgins, in recognizing Skeffington, also pointed out that the role of Irish women in nation-building has often been ignored. "For far too long, the historical contribution of Irish women in the struggle for emancipation, independence, and equality, and to our social life, has been overlooked," he said.

June 16th is immortalized forever as "Bloomsday" and the day is observed annually internationally. This is the day James Joyce's novel Ulysses takes place in 1904, and is the date of his first outing with his wife-to-be, Nora Barnacle. It is named after the novel's protagonist Leopold Bloom. Joyce always liked to say that Nora had come "sauntering" into his life out of the Dublin hotel where she worked as a waitress. The first day they went walking together was June 16, 1904, and Joyce always regarded it so romantically that he made it Bloomsday, the day everything happens in Ulysses. Nora had only a grammar school education, but when Joyce spouted his literary dreams to her and then declaimed: "Is there one who understands me?", Nora understood enough to say yes. She eloped with him to the Continent (they were not married till 27 years later) and he swore to "try myself against the powers of the world."

Irish-American James J. Braddock, recently portrayed by Russell Crowe in the movie Cinderella Man, was an inspiration to fellow Americans during the Depression. Impoverished, working on the docks and with a hand injury that had supposedly ended his boxing career, Braddock, in 1934, was called upon as a late replacement to fight heavyweight contender Art Lasky with only two days to prepare. Braddock shocked the world, beat Lasky, and went on a run of wins that would see him beat Max Baer for the heavy weight title on June 13th, 1935. During the fight, a dogged Braddock took a few heavy hits from the powerful younger champion (30 years versus 26 years for Baer), but Braddock kept coming, wearing down Baer, who seemed perplexed by Braddock's ability to take a punch. In the end, the judges gave Braddock the title with a unanimous decision. Braddock held the title for two more years before losing it to Joe Louis. "Irish Jim" personified the good-guy underdog who made it. He gave hope to millions in a time of unparalleled poverty and suffering in America.

A great Irish-American hero was Second Lieutenant Audie Murphy. Refused for service by both the Marines and the Navy, Murphy was finally accepted into the Army in June 1942. Due to his slight stature the Army tried to make him a cook but he stubbornly refused and went onto fight nine major campaigns and was wounded three times. Murphy won a Medal of Honor for his actions on January 26, 1945, when he stood atop a burning tank destroyer and, though wounded, single-handedly held off six German tanks. At the end of the war Murphy accepted

an invitation from Jimmy Cagney to join him in Hollywood where he became a movie star.

D-Day happened seventy five years ago this month and it is no surprise that many Irish and Irish-American soldiers were involved in that landing.

One of the first, some say the very first, US paratroopers on the ground on D-Day at 0015 hours (quarter past midnight) on 6 June was the 82nd's Bob Murphy, an Irish-American member of the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment's Pathfinder platoon, the only 'stick' to land intact on D-Day, and importantly where it was planned to, a mile west of Sainte-Mère-Église. The 101st Parachute Division was commanded by another Irish-American, whose Irish ancestry had possible connections in northwest Cork. The officer commanding the 'Screaming Eagles' was General Anthony McAuliffe of the 101st Airborne, who later in the war was to become the hero of Bastogne during the Battle of the Bulge in the Ardennes (December 1944-January 1945) and would become famous for his one-word response to the German demand for his surrender: 'Nuts'.

The Irish-Americans were not only among the echelons of US military high command on D-Day, they were liberally represented with some strong characters among all ranks, even colorfully so. Displaying ferocious Mohawk haircuts accompanied by facial war paint, representing a primitive and savagely wild appearance popular among some of the 101st Airborne Division personnel, Jack Agnew, born in Belfast, was a member of the 1st Demolition Section of HQ Company, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment. Colloquially called the 'Filthy Thirteen', the wartime antics of this group in service prompted the idea for the film *The Dirty Dozen*.

John F. Kennedy was sworn in as the 35th president on January 20, 1961, forever banishing the "No Irish Need Apply" signs. Born in Brookline, Massachusetts, on May 29, 1917, Kennedy was the first and only U.S. president who was Catholic. At 43, he was also the youngest. In June, 1963, Kennedy visited Ireland, the first sitting U.S. president to do so (Ulysses S. Grant visited Northern Ireland after he was out of office.) Kennedy visited New Ross and stood on the place where his great grandfather Patrick Kennedy last stood before he boarded a ship to America. For Irish people, Kennedy was a hero, an idol; he embodied the ultimate Irish success story - Great Hunger emigrant to the most powerful man in the world, all in just three generations. John promised that he would return to Ireland in the springtime. It was not to be. On November 21, 1963, Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas. Kennedy himself referred to his Irish visit as "the best four days of my life."

Traditional Music in the Rambling House at the Museum with Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann Thursday June 6th 7pm. Donations Appreciated.

Join us at the museum for our own rambling house and an informal music and song session by Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (the Irish Musicians' Association). This is a monthly event at the museum and very popular. Bring your party piece or instrument! Audience participation welcome and encouraged by our friendly group. Hear traditional Irish music, and old songs, stories and poems in a traditional format that still happens in many Irish homes (and bars) today.

The motto of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann is "ceol agus gaol" (music and kinship). Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, headquartered in Ireland, is the primary Irish organization dedicated to the promotion of the music, song, dance and the language of Ireland. There are branches of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann all over the world.

Light refreshments will be provided.



**Launch of new Fr. Patrick Peyton Exhibition.
Sunday May 9th 2pm. Donations Appreciated.**



All are invited to the launch of an exhibition on the life and work of Fr. Patrick Peyton, Albany's Family Rosary Priest.

To help celebrate the extraordinary life and work of Fr. Patrick Peyton, CSC, and recognize his intimate connections to Albany and its people, the Irish American Heritage Museum will present a Father Peyton exhibit and associated programming. The exhibit presently resides at the Father Patrick Peyton Centre in Attymas, County Mayo (Father Peyton's birthplace and childhood home) and has been generously loaned to the Museum. In 1942 Father Peyton began his work in Albany and from there his media programs and personal Rosary Crusades grew to reach literally millions of people around the world. His cause for sainthood in the Church is progressing and may be concluded with in the next few years. Join

us for a reception and a special viewing of the exhibit on Sunday the 9th.

Book Launch: Counterinsurgency and Collusion in Northern Ireland Monday June 10th, 7pm. Donations Appreciated.

The Irish American Heritage Museum and the LAOH JFK Division 1 are co-hosting the launch of the book *Counterinsurgency and Collusion in Northern Ireland* by Mark McGovern, PhD on Monday June 10th at 5PM in the Museum.

Dr. McGovern's book focuses on the end game policy of collusion in the Mid-Ulster area, when Republicans and their families were targeted by Loyalist paramilitaries and criminals acting in concert with British State forces. It is the result of years of working with Relatives for Justice (RFJ) interviewing the bereaved and injured, and intensive research into collusion as a state policy.

Also attending the book launch will be Mark Thompson, human rights attorney and founder of Relatives for Justice. RfJ was founded in 1991 and is an Northern Ireland based human rights NGO providing holistic support services to the bereaved and injured of the Troubles.



Counterinsurgency and Collusion in Northern Ireland

Mark McGovern

**Letters to Albany: Civil War Memories, Robert Mulligan
Tuesday June 11th, 7pm. Donations Appreciated.**

Robert Mulligan, Military Historian, will tell the stories of some Albany soldiers who fought in the Civil War through the letters they sent and received from home. This is a unique look at war from the personal perspectives of those at the front and at home. During the four years of

the Civil War, New York would send 474,000 men, 1/8 of New York's entire population, to comprise 1/5 of the Union Army. Ten regiments and one artillery battery would be raised in Albany County and Albany troops would play major roles and take casualties at almost every major battle of the Civil War. In total 2,327 men served in the 43rd. Of these, 813 were killed, wounded, captured, or died of disease. Albany's 43rd Regiment contained 5 companies known as the "Albany Rifles," 2 companies from NYC, one each from Montgomery County, Washington County and Otsego County. They started the war under Col. Francis L. Vinton with 706 men in September 1861. The 43rd fought at the siege of Yorktown, Lee's Mill, Williamsburg, and the Seven Days' Battle losing 71 killed, wounded and missing. The 43rd took part in the battle of Antietam, Chancellorsville, lost 138 men at Salem Church and 66 in an assault on Marye's Heights and Deep Run. Additional companies and recruits were added periodically.



**Personal Memories of Fr. Peyton, various speakers including the Leonard Family and Dorothy Halloran.
Wednesday June 16th, 7pm.**

Join us as the Leonard Family, Dorothy Halloran, Fr. Peyton's secretary, and Sisters Frances Gilchrist, CSJ and Sister Karen Gaube, CSJ, Sisters of St. Joseph who knew him from his early days at the College of St. Rose, share their memories and experiences of Fr. Peyton. The Leonard Family was an important family as Father Peyton began his ministry in Albany. Cecil Leonard was one of the first people to gather a group to fund raise so that Father Peyton could get the resources to develop his Rosary Ministry. They began their fund raising activities with an Irish Dance at the Ancient Order of Hibernian Hall and celebrated fifty years last year. The Sisters of St. Joseph and many students spent hours preparing Father Peyton's many letters to be sent around the country in support of his Rosary Ministry. The Sisters continue today as strong supporter of the Father Peyton Guild praying for his Canonization.



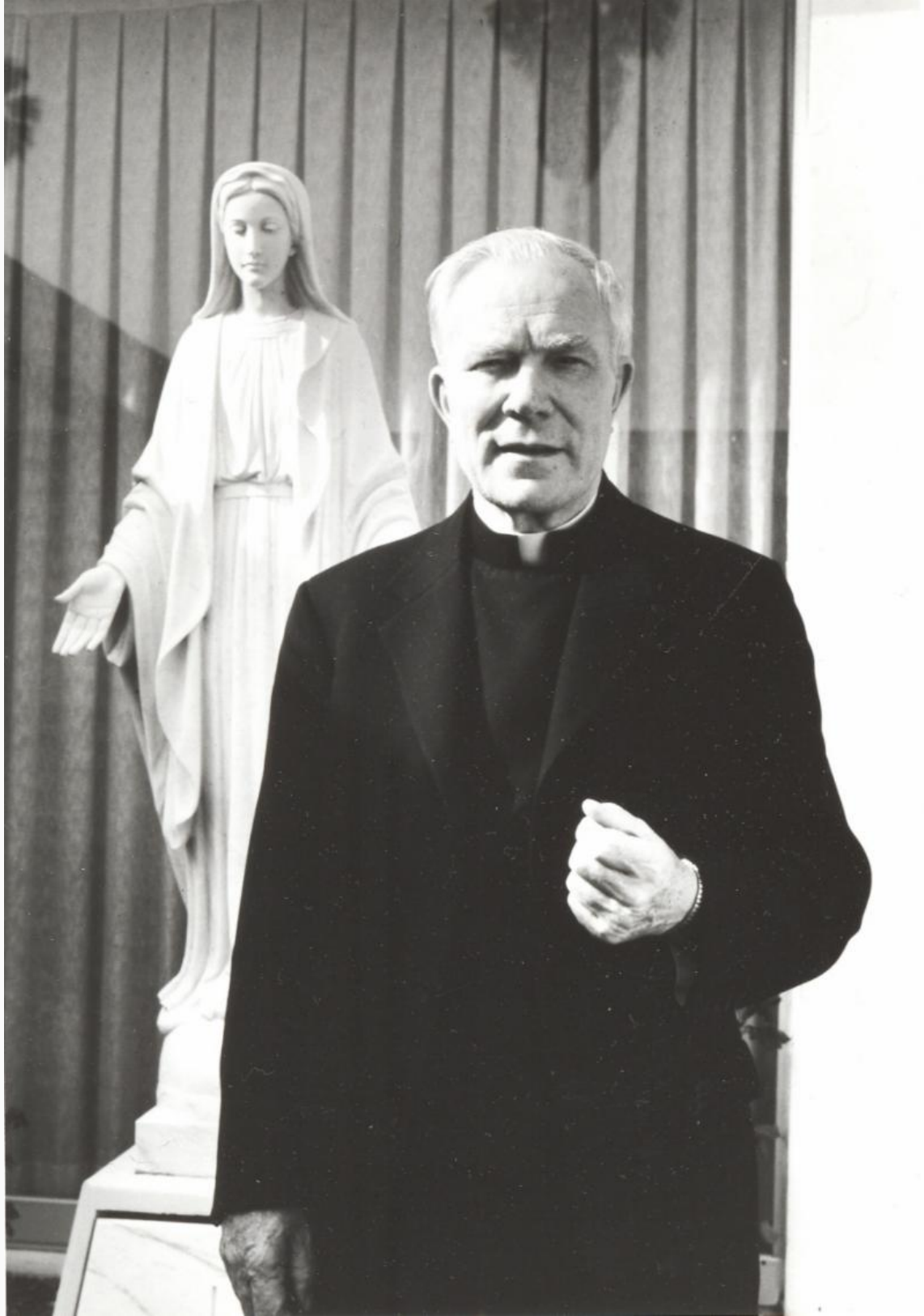
**Bloomsday: Readings to Celebrate Joyce
Monday June 17th, 7pm. Donations Appreciated.**

Bloomsday is the annual celebration of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, a novel set on June 16, 1904, to commemorate his first date with his future wife, Nora Barnacle. The New York Society for the Suppression of Vice (NYSSV), a private organization with a state charter empowering it to pursue obscenity eventually banned the sale of the novel in the U.S., which lasted until 1933. Come to the Museum to hear some of the more popular passages and to sing some songs of the "Rare Auld Times!"



**Fr. Peyton and Mary, the Mother of Jesus - Laetitia Rhatigan
Wednesday June 19th, 7pm. Donations Appreciated.**

Laetitia F. Rhatigan STD (Doctor of Sacred Theology) with a specialization in Mariology, and she will discuss Fr. Peyton's special devotion to Mary. Laetitia was Mission Director of Family Rosary Albany Office; she is currently a consultant for Holy Cross Family Ministries. She has ministered in parishes throughout the Albany Diocese as Catechetical director. Her fondest memories are those of working in parishes in the North County. She was Project Director of Community Maternity Services (working with adolescent parents) in Warren, Washington and Herkimer Counties.



**Musical Postcards from Irish Albany & Troy - Toss the Feathers
Thursday June 20th, 7pm. Donations Appreciated.**

Toss the Feathers presents an evening of tunes, songs and stories recalling the contributions of Irish Americans to the industry and culture of the Capital Region. They will sing and play familiar songs and give some background information on the history and traditions of Irish music in the region, including some fascinating tidbits on instruments

Toss the Feathers features David Pease on Irish flutes and whistles; Dave Smith on bouzouki, banjo and vocals; and Amy Schoch on violin, violotta and vocals. The band has been playing traditional Irish music and songs throughout the Capital Region since 2015.

Toss the Feathers

Musical Postcards from Irish Albany & Troy



Irish American Heritage Museum

370 Broadway

Albany, NY 12207

Thursday, June 20, 7-9 PM

We hope to see you there!

 An evening of tunes, songs and stories recalling the work and culture of Irish people in the Capital Region.

 www.tossthefeathers.band

 facebook.com/tossthefeathers5

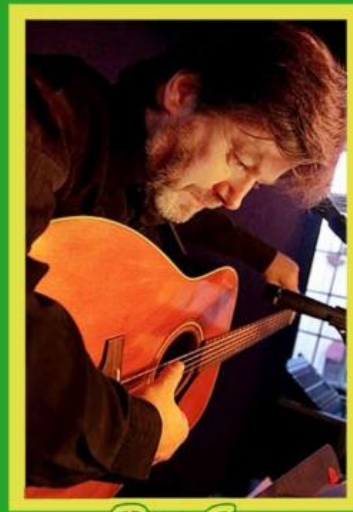
Brian Conroy and Pat Egan in Concert **Sunday June 23th, 7.30pm. \$15 members, \$20 non-members.**

A fantastic night of Irish music and talent. Brian Conway is a premier Irish-American fiddler, and performs with a skill, grace and force that are steeped in tradition but distinctively his own. Well known in the Irish/Celtic community, Conway has won numerous All-Ireland fiddling competitions, and has been called one of the best fiddlers of his generation. Nothing is missed or missing in Brian Conway's Sligo-style fiddling.

Originally from County Tipperary, Pat Egan now resides in Baltimore, Maryland. While growing up in his native County Tipperary, Patrick loved music so much that he used to take his guitar on the back of a horse and cart to school every week to get lessons from his school teacher, Phil Kelly. Luckily, there were lots of singers and guitarists in his home parish and one of the first musicians he ever heard playing traditional Irish music was his neighbor - uilleann piper Michael Cooney with whom, along with Paddy O'Brien, he would later go on to form the band Chulrua. Patrick has made extensive tours of the United States, and has also performed in Sweden, Norway, Holland, Germany, Scotland, Spain and France. He has appeared on numerous television and radio programs in Ireland and abroad.



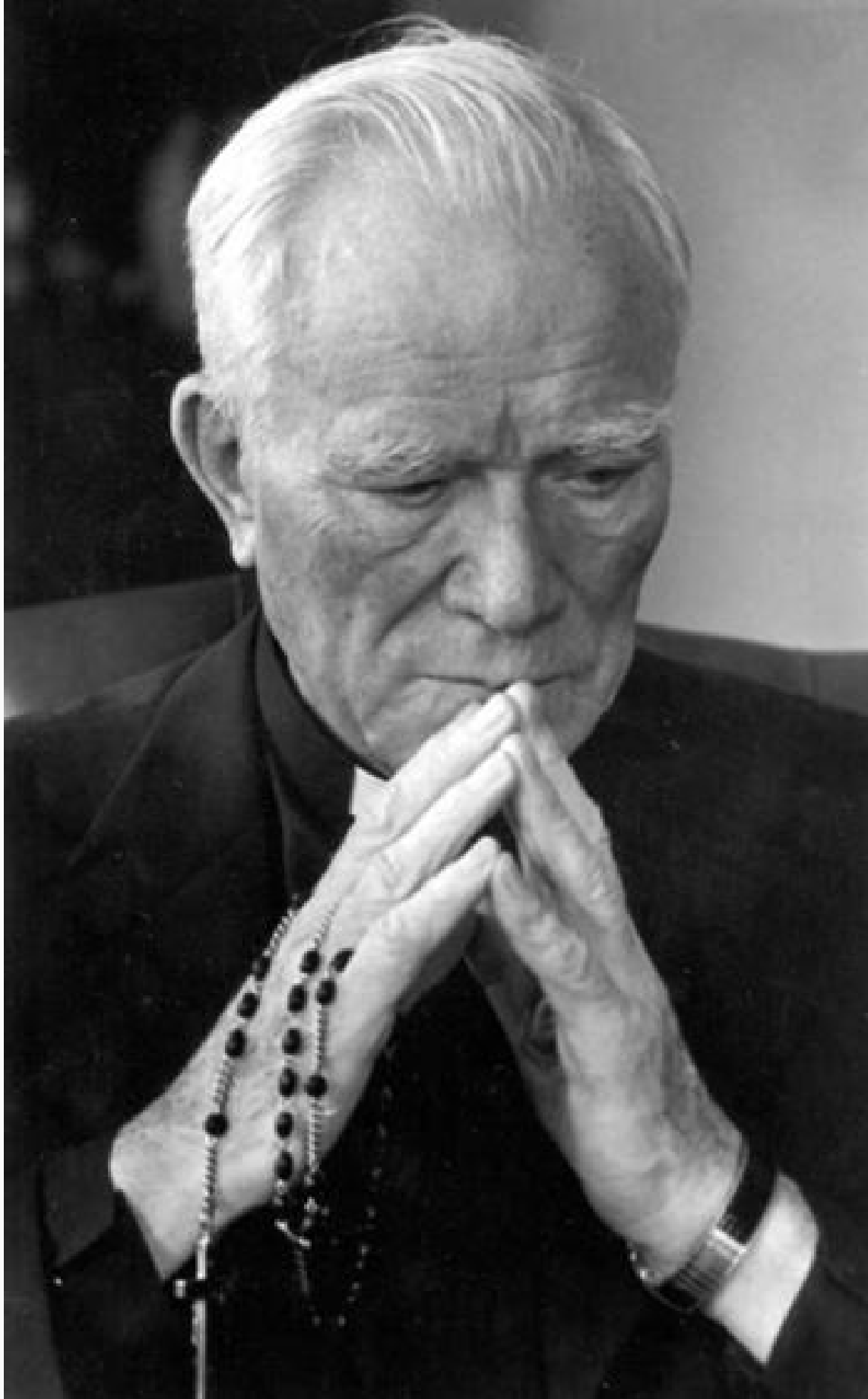
Brian Conway



Pat Egan

Fr. Patrick Peyton and the Road to Sainthood **Wednesday June 26th, 7.00pm.**

Join us as Fr. Leo Polselli, CSC, Chaplin at the Father Peyton Center, Easton MA will describe the path to Sainthood and the technical aspects of canonization and the miracles attributed to Fr. Peyton.



**Special Edition Irish Brew at Emporium Farm Brewery,
472 N Greenbush Rd., Rensselaer**

Tuesday June 25th, 7.00pm. \$25 for drink, food, and keepsake glass.

Roger Savoy and his team at the Emporium Farm Brewery have brewed a special batch of Irish Heritage goodness! Sample that (an Irish red), and a Stout, a cider, and an ale while enjoying hors d'oeuvres and some stories about Irish-Americans and the history of brewing and distilling here in the region, as well as some of their rebellions against the agency that became the IRS. Price includes a special collectible glass. Numbers are limited so be sure to call the Museum to reserve your spot.

