

The primary document that I ran across was in the archive files of Rev. Robert J. Donohoe. Father Donohoe is retired in central Phoenix but he had a very expansive career as a priest. He spent many of his early years working in the southern half of Arizona and many years working in the Diocese of Tucson<sup>1</sup>. In the early 50's Father Donohoe was given his own parish in Phoenix. The parish is called St. Agnes and Donohoe is its founding priest.

The document that I found was a letter from Father Donohoe wrote in July, 1955 to the Bishop. Donohoe asked if the Bishop would grant the request of the saying of a Red Mass for Morality. Father Donohoe's request was made on the behalf of William P. Mahoney, the President of the St. Thomas More Society for Catholic Lawyers, and others from the society.

**Concerning the Red Mass:**

A Red Mass is a special Mass that is said by the Bishop. It is said for special events or times in the church or people's lives. The saying of the Red Mass for Morality is a tradition that goes back to the 13th century (Arizona Register Oct7. 1955). This Red Mass is said to bring the presence of the Holy Spirit into the hearts of those that make the laws and enforce them.

The Holy Spirit is said in the Bible to have come down to earth after the death of Jesus. The apostles were scared to leave their homes and go out into the streets for fear that they might be killed by the crowds that condemned Jesus to death. When the Holy Spirit came down, he gave the disciples strength to stand for

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<sup>1</sup> Prior to the 1960's there was no Diocese of Phoenix. When the capital of Arizona was in Tucson the Church opened the Diocese in Tucson and it was the center of all church business in Arizona. Today there are two dioceses, the Diocese of Tucson that runs the southern half of the state and the Diocese of Phoenix that runs the northern half of the state. In a few years there will be three Diocese, one more will be opening in Flagstaff. The Diocese of Pheonix will mostly be responsible for Maricopa County since it is getting so populous.

what they believed, evangelize, and speak to the people about God. By having the Red Mass said it is hoped that the Legislature and lawyers will let the Holy Spirit lead them in doing their jobs, and give them the strength to stand up and do what is right and speak out against "unethical" practices.

**About the St. Thomas More Society:**

St. Thomas More was Lord Chancellor of England and a well renowned lawyer, he is the patron saint of the society. More was a very honest and intelligent man. He was an excellent lawyer. Before Henry the VIII, King of England was granted a divorce by the Pope, he wanted permission to be married to Anne Boleyn. But the Pope refused to let him marry in the church. So the King decided to break from the Catholic church and start the Church of England. St. Thomas was the only person in his cabinet to stand up to him and say that what he was doing was wrong. More was so good at using the law that he stayed out of the reach of the King being able to put him to death. More never broke the law and the only way that the king could have him killed was by having a witness perjure himself<sup>2</sup>. After More was sentenced, he spoke his mind in Parliament considering that he needed to set the record straight. When he gave his speech Parliament was so impressed that they booed the King.

The Society tries to rise up to the standard that More had left behind. The Society does charity work at the Bishop's request and helps handle legal disputes for the church. But mostly what they do is work as a organization that lawyers turn to for help and support in their beliefs and the decisions that they make. If a lawyer takes a case and gets into a situation that

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<sup>2</sup> The witness was St. Thomas's aide, he was bribed with More's job.

they don't feel comfortable with, then the Society helps them get a better look at what they are doing. For instance, there are some lawyers that find it against their beliefs to do different jobs like handling divorce cases. As a lawyer they can see that it's important to help a client to set up their life, but personally they are against divorce. The society could help them in deciding whether they should or should not take the case, or even back out of one even after it has started<sup>3</sup> .

When I started to read the letter I did not know what a find that I had stumbled across. The letter talked about having a Red Mass said by the Bishop in late October during the week before the start of the legislative session<sup>4</sup>. The letter asked for the Mass to be said at 5:00 so the legislators, Supreme court and Governor can attend. Father Donohoe extended the opening for the Bishop to come. Fr. Donohoe asked for Bishop Green to pontificate and for Bishop Gercke to give greetings at the end of the Mass. And Mr. Mahoney is said by Donohoe to have asked for the presence of Monsignor North to address the assembly on the Natural Law. Father Donohoe suggested that the Bishop send a letter to Cardinal Gammarelli in Rome to get the vestments for the Mass.

A couple of problems came up that were a little bit hard to solve and took a little bit of investigating. (1) I did not know if the Mass had occurred. (2) If it had occurred I did not know the exact date. (3) I did not know who attended. (4) I did not

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<sup>3</sup> In some cases lawyers are given information late and they find out things about clients or the situation that they are in and it is better to drop the case. This can be hard to do if the case has been going on for months or is in the trial proses. They can get help from other lawyers that think like them. One of the most annoying thing for a lawyer is to talk to a partner in their firm about how they feel personally about something.

<sup>4</sup> The legislative sessions back then started in November and that included the Judicial session as well as the Legislative session. Today the Judicial session is all year around, and the Legislative session starts in January.

know if the Mass was a one time shot, or if it had an impact on the religious history of Arizona. Without a date, I could not find a story in a newspaper. An algorithmic search through weeks of papers was looking like a waste of time; I did not even know how to start by asking around in Catholic organizations.

I returned home and gave my father a call since he is a Catholic lawyer perhaps he had heard on the St. Thomas More Society and new if they were still around. He told me that he was a member of the Society and he attends the Mass every year. The Red Mass for Morality is a tradition that has been going on for almost forty years and I had found a original letter from its planning. Since the Legislative session date of opening was moved from November to January, so had the date of the Mass.

In order to find out the exact date I called the Diocese of Phoenix and they told me to call the Kino Institute because they had the Archives of the Catholic newspaper The Catholic Sun. They sent me back to the Diocese office with a number to the archives because they only had listings for the past two years. The Diocese Archives told me that they didn't have information from the 50's since it was before their beginning, I would need to call the Diocese of Tucson. In searching for information on this paper I found out a lot of information of the history of the church in Arizona plus the Mass. In the Archives I spoke to Don Brosner who was very helpful in taking the vague information that I gave him and he found a article in the Arizona Register dated October 7<sup>5</sup>. In the article it told that they were planing to have the Mass on Oct 20th. An article in the Arizona Republic

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<sup>5</sup> The article was written prior to the Mass taking place. But with a date I was able to find confirmation of the event.

dated October 21, page 29, confirmed that the Mass happened as planned. The article in the Register gave a good description of what was planned to have happened, this answered my question that it had happened and that Bishop Gerke has said the Mass and Bishop Green did not give an address. The address was given by Monsignor William North, from Los Angeles.

In trying to get a perspective of who came to the Mass I called Mr. William Mahoney, County Attorney. He is the founder and former President of the St. Thomas More Society. Mr. Mahoney could not remember too much about what happened at the first Mass. What he did remember was that there were not too many Catholic Lawyers and that some of the legislature came to the event. In the article that Don Brosner sent me I received the number for Fr Robert Graft, he had a secondary connection to the planning of the Mass. When I called him he told me that Father Donohoe was still alive<sup>6</sup> and told me to talk to him about the Mass, he also mentioned that Fr Donohoe was very proud of the Mass. I called Father Donohoe and he told me that he remembered that Governor McFarland might have attended. Fr. Donohoe is aged and when I called him he was not quite awake so I did not persist in asking him too many questions. For both Mr. Mahoney and Fr. Donohoe they are elderly and the questions that I asked them had to be general to get any kind of accuracy. I was amazed with their ability to recall the event. Mr. Mahoney knew all of the people on a personal basis and he did not talk about them as historical figures like I did about them.

Mr Mahoney said that when the Society started there were not

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<sup>6</sup> In looking through Donohoe's papers I assumed that he probably was dead considering that most important persons papers are released after they are dead.

many Catholic lawyers in Arizona. What he intended the society to be was a outreach program for professionals. The shape that it would take on would be more along the lines of obtaining a wide range of different talented people that could be pulled together to help out in the community in different ways. But as it turned out the number of Catholic lawyers grew and so did the numbers that joined.

**Background:**

Prior to the 1950's Catholics in America were not as concerned with Catholic presence in politics as is stated by Fuchs in John F. Kennedy and American Catholicism. From the 20's until WWII most Catholics voted from an economic stance instead of a religious one. When Roosevelt took office more Catholics were put into his cabinet than past presidents. Catholics started to become more aware of their place in America, and started to become concerned with the way they were being represented.

With an increase in mobility by Catholics they came into contact with Protestants more and more. There were some clashes and some misunderstandings. But some tried to bridge that gap even as misguided as their attempts were. In the 30's Father Charles Coughlin was a radio personality and was considered a Nativist with a twist that Catholics and Protestants were all in the same boat battling Jews and other countries (Fuchs).

At the end of WWII, Catholic servicemen came home and built parishes and participated on community affairs. They went to college and found corporate jobs (Walch, 75). Many Catholics became affluent and in almost every Diocese there was at least one very wealthy family.

Senator McCarthy of Wisconsin was a Catholic and he while trying to get reelected to office came up with a ploy of trying to find Communist that has infiltrated American society. As the number of people that supported him changed so did the number of people he said were on his list of known Communists. Even though there is not much connection between Senator McCarthy and Catholics presence in America during the 1950's, he was able to rally Catholics together under one banner and create a sense of unity (Walch, 84).

As time went by and Catholics became more mobile and they came onto contact with Protestants, both groups started to tolerate each other more and more. But there were still things that were fought over. (1) The giving of tax money to parochial schools, (2) the appointment of an ambassador to the Vatican, and (3) related church state matters (Walch, 75). Tensions really started to decrease with the election of Pope John XXIII, who was a more friendly and less aggressive image. But the best signs that things were changing was the election of Kennedy to the Presidency.

In Arizona the presence of Catholicism and Protestant relations took on a different feeling. The area of Arizona is set in a rich Chicano Catholic image. The events that unfolded back east did not have the same affect in Arizona. This area was very rural and almost any European American was welcome. Guaranteed that there were some small towns that were settled by a majority of one faith or another. There was not a tension between Protestant and Catholics in Arizona as back east because in this part of the country Protestants were the new arrivals, unlike back

East were Catholic were the new arrivals. Most of the tension was between European Americans and Chicano Americans. Anti-Catholic sentiments were secondary to Anti-Chicano sentiments. Most of the European Catholics that were in the area were Irish and they were accepted for the most part by the Protestants. There was a even distribution of political power for both groups. Mostly one of the only fears that Protestants in Arizona had against Catholics was that they might try to bring Catholic Mexicans to setting in Arizona to increase the population of Catholics.

The first amendment establishes the ability of religion to operate without interference from the government. When this amendment is broken, it's not to hard to find it. But with the debate over the seperation of church and state it is hard to find when religion is influencing the government. In the 50's, the separation of church and state was a big topic. One of the major topics was the Catholic church wanting federal money for parochial schools an a ambassador to the Vatican. With these topics being debated the separation of church and state was looked at as a friend by Protestants. Most of the people that came to the Mass were in government positions. They were going to the Mass to pray about their activities in government. With many Protestants scared of the Catholic church gaining political power in the U.S., the Red Mass stands out as a step in the other direction away from separation of church and state.

One question that I did not understand is why would a Protestant come to a Catholic Mass? Since most of the people that attended were in jobs where it matters what people think about them. When I looked into the topic of Protestant and



Catholic interaction I found an answer that showed the saying of the Red Mass to be a uniquely American experience. What this means is that the reasons that people possibly showed up are unique to the personality of the American people. Americans are sales people and amateur psychologists, trained at an early age. We are always trying to sell our position. Most of the time that we spend is in doing business of some sort or another (Scharper, 8). American Catholics have a close tie to their clergy, they leave questions of faith to them (Scharper, 6). Catholics will not stray too far from their comfort zone they have in the church, they feel lost without it. If there are problems between clergy and the faithful there is no telling what will happen. If there are problems in a parish or a diocese, the problem takes center stage of everything else. Protestants know that doing business with Catholics is much easier if a Catholic's faith is stable. When things are not running smoothly for Catholics, Protestants know that Catholics are strongly self-examining themselves, and it makes Protestant nervous. Since the Red Mass is tied to lawyers in their business atmosphere and that its important to Catholic lawyers, Protestant lawyers are willing to go if it will help them in business. This is not to say that Protestant don't go to the Mass to pray or that Catholics are paralyzed by parish problems. All this means is that this is one reason why the Mass is a uniquely American event.

In the present, the Mass has been going on for almost forty years. There are many more people that show up to the Mass. Clergy that are from other faiths come to the Mass. Last year the Bishop from the Methodist church and the Episcopalian churches

came. In talking to a very devoted Methodist, and well renowned lawyer Mr. Jim McMahon said that he attended the Red Mass for religious reasons and because it was the place to go to be seen. If a lawyer wants to get in and talk to influential people it's a good place to go. The Red Mass has grown as has the ability of Catholics and Protestants to get along with one another.