

Archbishop Robert Joseph Dwyer

32nd State Chaplain of Oregon 1971-72



Robert Joseph Dwyer was born August 1, 1908 in Salt Lake City, UT to John and Mabel Maynard. His father was an active lay leader, Grand Knight of the Salt Lake City Knights of Columbus and state deputy for Utah. A shy and bookish child with a lifelong dislike of athletics, he worked his way through his father's extensive library of English literary classics with single-minded intensity. From it, he gained an immense vocabulary and he loved to stump his mother with big words, but also a rather archaic prose style.

He graduated in absentia from Judge Memorial Catholic High School, for he had run away from home, to his parents' considerable consternation, to enter the seminary (they later reconciled themselves to his vocation). He attended junior seminary at St. Mary Manor at South Langhorne, PA, and St. Patrick major seminary at Menlo Park, CA. He was ordained in the Cathedral of the Madeleine in 1932, as Utah's first native-born priest.

His first assignment was as assistant at the Cathedral of the Madeleine at Salt Lake City. In 1934 he was appointed chaplain and instructor at the College of St. Mary of the Wasatch at Salt Lake City, a post he held until 1938. He also was chaplain of the Newman club at the University of Utah from 1933 until 1938.

His newspaper career, which was to remain an avocation for more than 40 years, began in 1934, when he was appointed editor of the Intermountain Catholic, which later became the Intermountain Catholic Register, official Catholic newspaper of the state of Utah, for the first of three tours of duty. He served as editor until 1938, again from 1942-46, and from 1950-52.

From 1938 until 1941 he studied at Catholic University of America at Washington, D.C., where he received his doctorate of philosophy in 1941. His major field was American history, his minor anthropology. His dissertation, published as *The Gentile Comes to Utah*, was an



immediate classic in Utah historical writing, and he served as an official of the Utah State Historical Society.

After completing his studies, he was appointed superintendent of Catholic education for the diocese. In 1947 he was appointed vice rector of the Cathedral at Salt Lake City, and in 1948 he was made rector. While still rector, he was named a papal chamberlain with the title of monsignor in 1950. It was in 1952 while serving as rector of the Cathedral, editor of the Intermountain Catholic Register, diocesan director for the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, promoter of justice in the diocesan tribunal and diocesan director of education, he was appointed Bishop of Reno by Pope Pius XII.

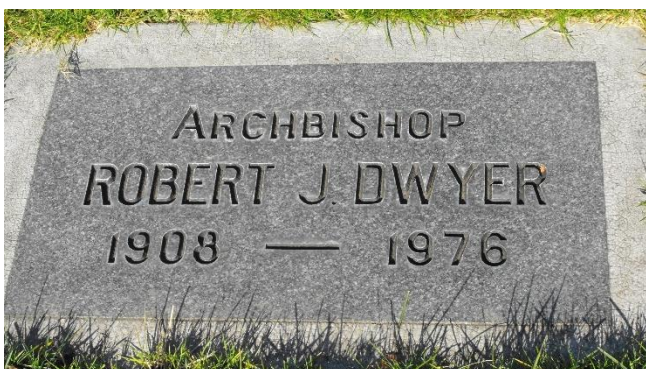
He was named the sixth archbishop of Portland on December 14, 1966, after the retirement of Archbishop Howard. His installation was on February 6, 1967, at St. Mary Cathedral in Portland, OR. Those, of course, were the years of the vast protests against the Vietnam War, and Dwyer had the temerity to defend the war in one of the most liberal cities in the country. Perhaps his lowest moment came on one Good Friday: after he had finished his homily, a group of protesters burst into the cathedral and staged an antiwar skit right in the center aisle of the church.

Archbishop Dwyer was the Oregon Knights of Columbus State Chaplain 1971-72.

He retired in 1974 to a sprawling house in Piedmont, CA, where he spent the last two years of his life with his immense library and art collection, his private chapel, his little lap dog Minette, and his housekeeper, whom he had known since she was a college student in Salt Lake City and lived with his parents.

Archbishop Robert Joseph Dwyer he was correcting page proofs of his last publication while he was being driven to the hospital where he died on March 24, 1976 in Oakland, CA.

He is buried at the Mount Calvary Cemetery, Portland, OR.



"It is not only a see with a future as great as anything the Pacific Northwest offers, but, to express a personal viewpoint, it is part of my own western America, my own country." Archbishop Robert Dwyer, December 1966, Portland, OR