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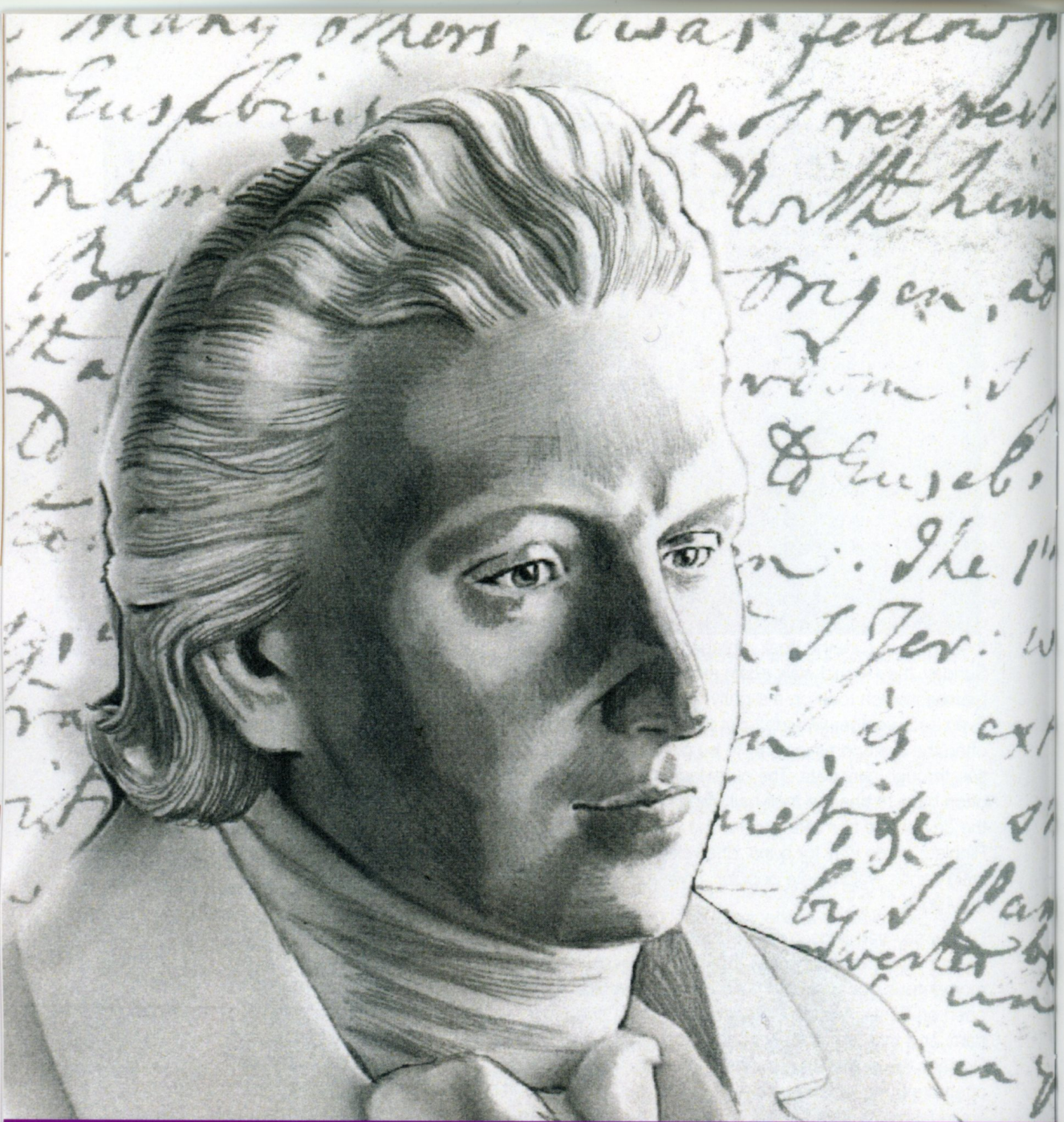
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HAYDOCK OF INGOL, PRESTON

By William D. Shannon, PhD, FSA

When Joe Biden was sworn in as President of the United States on 20 January 2021, it was not just any old Bible that was used, but a family heirloom copy of what is known as the Haydock Bible. This was the most popular version of the Bible to be found in Catholic churches and homes in the nineteenth century, both in England and in the USA. And it was the work of two men from Preston, Thomas and George Haydock.

The Haydock family, of Cottam Hall, had been lords of the manor of Cottam, near Preston, since the Middle Ages. During the reign of Henry VIII, a younger son of the family, William Haydock, a monk at Whalley Abbey, was tried for treason at Lancaster in March 1537, then taken to Whalley to be executed. His crime was supporting the Pilgrimage of Grace, an uprising against Henry, in opposition to the dissolution of the monasteries which began in 1536.

The Haydock family were 'Recusants' – people who refused to accept the Church of England, and who instead stuck to the old faith. Such families frequently dedicated one or more younger sons to the priesthood, and that was the path taken by George Haydock, great-nephew of William, who went abroad to train for the priesthood at Douai (the English Seminary in northern France established by Cardinal William Allen in 1568) and at the English College at Rome, being ordained in 1581. He was promptly sent on the English Mission – but was arrested soon after landing, put in the Tower of London, and was executed with four other priests at Tyburn on 12 February 1584.

The strong Catholic tradition continued in the family, although the last family member to live in Cottam Hall died childless in or around 1718. Nevertheless, a junior branch of the family continued to live at The Tagg, which had been the family dower house, on what is now Tag Lane in Ingol to the north-west of Preston, less than half a

kilometre along the lane from Cottam Hall. The fact that the Haydocks kept up the family tradition can be seen in the children of George Haydock of The Tagg (1721-1783), two of whom became priests, a third went to train as a priest but dropped out; while a daughter became a nun.

The last of the children, George, was born in 1774. In 1784 he was confirmed, taking the Confirmation name of Leo – and was thereafter usually referred to as George Leo. In 1785 he and his older brother Thomas entered Douai to begin their training as priests, but in 1793 they found themselves caught up in England's war with France, which led to Douai closing. They came back to England to continue their studies. In 1798 George Leo was ordained, but continued at his seminary in Durham as a professor. Thomas meanwhile dropped out in 1796, and set up a publishing business in Manchester (and later in Dublin). George Leo was sent to serve as priest initially at the chapel at Ugthorpe, Yorkshire, then at Whitby, then at Westby on the Fylde – and later at Penrith, where he was to end his days.

From 1806, Thomas began work on a new edition of the Bible in English, aimed at Catholic families. The First Catholic Relief Act was passed in 1791, allowing Catholics to worship legally for the first time in 250 years. The edition was based upon the English translation of the Vulgate (Latin) bible, which had been published by the English College at Rheims in 1582 (for the New Testament), and the English College at Douai in 1609 (for the Old Testament). This Douai-Rheims bible had been accompanied in the mid-eighteenth century by a commentary by Bishop Challoner; what was to be different about Thomas' new version was the far more detailed commentaries, to be written by George Leo – so detailed that they effectively doubled the size of the work. The first edition appeared in two volumes, Old and New Testament, folio size, in 1814. It proved hugely popular, and an octavo size version appeared in 1824, followed by the first American edition in 1825. Its title page informed the reader it contained 'Useful Notes, Critical, Historical, Controversial and Explanatory, selected from the Most Eminent Commentators and the Most Able and Judicious Critics, by the Rev. Geo. Leo



The dedication at St Mary Newhouse, Station Lane, Barton, near Preston, 15 May 2016, by the Bishop of Lancaster, of a memorial to Thomas Haydock, who is buried there. The monument, which includes a sculpture of an open bible together with a dove representing the Holy Spirit, had been presented by Sidney Ohlhausen (second right). (Author's photograph)

Haydock'. From the start it was known as 'The Haydock Bible'.

The Haydock Papers Archive at Ushaw College, Durham, had been mined by Catholic historian Joseph Gillow for his 1888 work *The Haydock Papers*, but now in 2023 American historian Sidney Ohlhausen, author amongst other things of *The American Catholic Bible in the Nineteenth Century* (2006) has made all the letters to or from George Leo accessible to all in a newly published work, *The Life and Letters of Rev. George Leo Haydock* (Loreto Publications, New Hampshire, 2023). The bulk of this book comprises over two hundred letters, transcribed and annotated by Sidney, which vividly bring to life the trials and tribulations of the two brothers, and their family.

Despite the success of the Haydock Bible and the many other devotional works he produced,

Thomas seems to have been permanently on the verge of bankruptcy. In letter after letter to his brother, he invariably opens with a plea for the loan of £10, or more. When in 1833 George Leo, then approaching 60 years of age, wrote his will, one of the clauses referred to Thomas, saying 'I forgive my brother all I ever lent him, which would now amount to about £1,200 with interest'.

George Leo himself was relatively comfortably off. His father had died in 1783, but his mother continued to occupy and enjoy The Tagg until her death in 1822. From an uncle's death in 1804, George Leo jointly owned The Tagg with his unmarried sister Elizabeth, having bought out Thomas's share in 1806 for £400. James, the elder brother, also a priest, died in 1809, but does not seem to have had a share. George Leo seems to have always had access to sufficient

capital to invest in properties in an around his parishes, and his will lists various houses he had acquired.

However, it was his financial dealings that were to land him in the most difficult part of his life. When he moved from Ugthorpe to Whitby, his successor felt he should make good a debt that George Leo disputed. The Vicar Apostolic (equivalent to a Bishop) sided with the successor – and despite the protestations of his parishioners, George Leo was removed from Whitby to take up the role of Chaplain at Westby Hall.

In August 1831 he was deprived of his priesthood altogether and forced to retire to The Tagg (his sister Elizabeth, who had been living there, had died in 1827). In a letter full of sympathy for his predicament his second sister Margaret, an Augustinian nun known as Sister Stanislaus (and sometimes referred to by her brothers as 'Sister Stanny'), who clearly knew her brother only too well, wrote on 23 May 1832,

"...For God's sake follow the advice of your friend Mr Woodcock; and keep quiet and silent in regard of your Bishop, for I see plainly that you will have nothing but vexation and no redress. Beware of scandal by publishing your sentiments of him..."

George Leo nevertheless appealed to the Pope, but got nowhere. It was not until the Bishop died and was replaced that George Leo was readmitted to the priesthood and given a new position in Penrith in 1839, where he remained for the rest of his life, dying in 1849.

Despite the big issues which much of the correspondence deals with, the real joy comes from the insights into the day to day lives of priests and people. For example, we learn in one of Thomas' letters to George Leo (5 February 1823) that Thomas' son, George, 'has been inoculated for the cowpox, has 5 teeth & will be 1 year old the 7th of this month'. At this date Edward Jenner (1749-1823), the inventor of the process was still alive, so this was very much cutting edge – especially as Thomas and his family were then living in Dublin.

On more mundane matters, there are frequent references to farming, as a significant portion of

George Leo's income came from the produce of the fields associated with his various chapels or 'missions'. He had, for example, bought fifteen acres of land at Ugthorpe, on which he 'was able to keep 2 or 3 cows & a mare, and besides grow as much corn, potatoes, etc as will serve my own house & have some to sell' (9 March 1809). Back home, his sister Elizabeth managed the Tagg estate. She writes to George Leo not just as a brother, or a priest, but as a fellow hands-on farmer (19 January 1817):

"...I hope you got all your corn in well. We got ours very well in: and I think we never had better oatmeal, not quite so much as last year, but a great deal better than we expected. We mowed the remainder of our wheat shortly after my last to you, and it looks as well as any of the last season hereabouts. We had near three windles of our wheat. William took seven bushels to market, and sold it for seven pounds eight shillings, for the use of Stonyhurst College."

At his death in 1849, George Leo bequeathed The Tagg to his niece Helen Chapman and her husband, John, who had been living there and farming it since Elizabeth's death. John sold the farm in 1858, at which time it would appear from the auction sale notice, that it was now largely a dairy farm, with '15 useful milch cows... four one-year old heifers, five calves... cheese press and frame, curd crusher, cheese vats and tubs, milk cans and mugs, churn.' It remained a working farm until demolition in 1956, when Preston Corporation acquired the land for housing. ■

Editor's Note

The book is available for sale in the UK by Cenacle Books, of Skelmersdale. It includes an Appendix by Bill Shannon, analysing a hand-drawn map of his estates, made by George Leo, and covering the Tagg estate and his properties in Whitby.

www.cenacle.co.uk/the-life-and-letters-of-rev-george-leo-haydock