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"History of the Catholic Church in the United States" by John Gilmary Shea.

## CHAPTER XV.

### DIOCESE OF VINCENNES.

RT. REV. SIMON GABRIEL BRUTÉ, FIRST BISHOP, 1834-1839.

WHEN Pope Gregory XVI. on the 6th of May, 1834, resolved to relieve the Bishop of Bardstown of the last portion of his annexed district, he erected the see of Vincennes by his bull "Maximas inter," giving it as its diocese the States of Indiana and Illinois east of a line from Fort Massac along the eastern boundaries of Johnson, Franklin, Jefferson, Marion, Fayette, Shelby and Mann counties, to the Illinois River, eight miles above Ottawa, and thence to the northern boundary of the State. The Bishop of the see was to be a suffragan of the Archbishop of Baltimore.<sup>1</sup>

The selection for the throne of the newly created bishopric fell on one of the most learned and saintly priests in the United States. Simon William Gabriel Bruté de Rémur was born March 20, 1779, at Rennes, France, of a wealthy family, afterwards ruined by the Revolution. His mother supported her children by establishing a book-store and printing office, and Gabriel became an expert compositor. After an honorable course in the college of his native city, he spent two years at the Polytechnic school; then studying medicine, he took the highest prize in the college; he obtained his degree in 1803. But he renounced the world and its prospects. The lessons of the Abbé Carron, under whom he made his first communion in

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<sup>1</sup> Bullarium de Propaganda Fide, v., pp. 108-109; Catholic Telegraph, iii., p. 405.

1791, gave him an inclination for the Church, which he followed. He entered the Seminary of St. Sulpice, and was ordained priest June 10, 1808. His learning, scientific knowledge and virtues won him a circle of illustrious friends, among them the famous Lamennais and his brother, and late in life, from amid his labors in America, he endeavored in vain to recall that erring priest back to the Church. He left a professor's chair in the seminary at Rennes, two years later, to accompany Bishop Flaget to America. After a short mission career at St. Joseph's on the Eastern Shore, this priest of a varied and solid learning was successively professor at Mount St. Mary's, and President of St. Mary's College, Baltimore. The Seminary of Mount St. Mary's, with which he identified himself fully, owed him much of its success and influence. When first appointed to the see of Vincennes, he declined it, but yielded when the bulls were sent a second time.<sup>1</sup> He was consecrated in the Cathedral of St. Louis, October 28, 1834, by Rt. Rev. Benedict J. Flaget, Bishops Rosati and Purcell being assistants. On the 5th of November, he reached the city which was to be his future residence as Bishop. Some miles in advance, he was met by Rev. Mr. Lalumière and a number of citizens on horseback, who escorted him and his companions, the Bishops of Bardstown and Cincinnati, to the Cathedral. The ceremony of his installation took place the same evening, and thus he took possession of St. Francis Xavier's Cathedral, a

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<sup>1</sup> Autobiographical notes of Bishop Bruté. Letters in Bayley, "Memoirs of Rt. Rev. S. G. Bruté," p. 75, and in Alerding, "History of the Catholic Church in the diocese of Vincennes," Indianapolis, 1888, p. 124, etc. Bishop Bruté in vain endeavored to recall to his duties the aged Col. Vigo, who had been so active in the Revolution, and had done much for the Church, but he died without the sacraments.

“ plain brick building, 115 feet long and 60 broad, consisting of four walls and the roof, unplastered and not even whitewashed, destitute even of a place for preserving the vestments and sacred vessels. Only a simple altar of wood with a neatly gilded tabernacle, a cross and six beautiful candlesticks, a gift from France, which were much in contrast with the poverty and destitution of the place.” He issued a pastoral letter to his flock, and began to study his position. The Catholic population of Vincennes were poor, generally ignorant, and requiring much instruction and rousing. He found by experience that the pew rents and subscriptions would amount in all to about \$300 a year, enough for a self-denying missionary, but affording nothing for the expenses of a bishop and the constant calls that he might expect. As he was alone, his first duty was to this little flock. He prepared the congregation for the great feast of Christmas, and was consoled to see many receive holy communion at the midnight and two other masses which he celebrated ; and nineteen young people make their first communion.

To form a definite idea of the scattered congregations of Catholics in Indiana and Illinois, he resolved to visit the west and north of the diocese, while Rev. S. P. Lalumière made a similar tour through the south and west. He visited that priest's Church of St. Peter at Washington, dedicated St. Mary's Church on Box's Creek, erected by the same clergyman, said mass and gave instruction to the French families at Rivière au Chat, while Rev. Mr. Lalumière visited Columbus and Shelbyville. Meanwhile the Bishop, often traveling over wet prairies till near midnight, had reached Chicago, to which he induced the Bishop of St. Louis to send back Rev. J. M. J. St.

Cyr; and where a residence had been erected for him. Rev. Mr. Desseille's mission and Rev. Mr. Badin's vacant establishment at South Bend were next visited. He returned at last to his poor Cathedral. Yet he made another excursion in February to Edgar County, Illinois, where he found many Catholics near Paris. He was appalled at the work before him. "No priests, not one except those from other dioceses. Having come alone, I reside alone, in a most depressing



REV. J. M. J. ST. CYR.

situation; but I am resigned and do not complain for my wretched self." "I need a good priest to reside here." "There are six or seven hundred Catholics at Fort Wayne, and fifteen hundred to two thousand, including those employed on the canal." They had not heard mass for seven months, and the Bishop had no one to send them.<sup>1</sup> He set out again April 29.

<sup>1</sup> Catholic Telegraph, iii., pp. 404-5, 411-12; U. S., Cath. Miscellany, xiv., p. 86; Jesuit, v., p. 391. Bishop Bruté to Bishop Résé, March 4, 1835; same to Rev. J. Timon, March 3, May 28, 1835.

and visited Danville; Chicago, where Rev. Mr. St. Cyr had gathered a flock of four hundred, and where the Bishop was received with honor; Michigan City, Laporte; Desseilles, a village of 650 Catholic Indians, with its Catholic chief Pokegan. Then he inspected the property near South Bend, transferred to him by Rev. S. T. Badin, before he departed for Cincinnati, and the vacant house of the Sisters. Then he proceeded to the village of Chickakos, also attended by Rev. Mr. Deseille, sleeping on a bench in the chapel, after officiating for the Indians, of whom the zealous priest had baptized more than a hundred, and administering confirmation. His next visits were to Logansport and Terre Haute, saying mass at each place.

On his return he received Rev. Mr. Lalumière's report. He had found more Catholics than the Bishop had done. In three places they had begun to build churches. The hundred and fifty Catholic families at Fort Wayne were finishing their little church, 30 feet by 60. To them the Bishop was now able to send a priest just ordained, Rev. Mr. Ruff, able to speak the three languages, English, French, and German, used by his flock. The Bishop having thus acquired a fairly accurate knowledge of his diocese, prepared for his departure. He announced his purpose to his flock in a pastoral letter, and appointing Rev. Mr. Lalumière his Vicar-General, started on the 16th of July, 1835, for France, and in fifty-one days reached his native land.

His visit to Europe proved not unavailing. In Austria, especially, he was befriended by the Empress and by Prince Metternich. "When in Rome," he wrote, "asking Gregory XVI. for his blessing to be a good bishop, I told him, that in 1804 I had knelt to Pius VII., in a private opportunity, and received his bless-

ing to be a good priest." Cheered and encouraged by his reception he returned to America, landing in New York, July 20, 1836, and reaching his cathedral a month later. By the aid given him he established a diocesan seminary, an orphan asylum, and a free school at Vincennes, completed the Cathedral, and aided in erecting several small churches. But he brought back what was even more important than worldly means, nineteen priests and seminarians, many of them Bretons, resolute, enduring, full of faith and zeal.<sup>1</sup> The priests were soon stationed at points of greatest need, and the Bishop, resuming his old life of professor,



ST. FRANCIS XAVIER'S CATHEDRAL, VINCENNES, 1834.

The former church stood in the same inclosure, at the side.

formed the seminarians to the ecclesiastical learning, and especially to that spirit of zeal and sacrifice which he could so well inspire. They, too, gradually entered on the field of labor. Log churches rose to gather the faithful, or, where Catholics were better endowed, churches of frame or brick, at Evansville, Jaspers, Lanesville, New Alsace, Oldenburg, in Vigo County.

With the beginning of 1837 the diocese showed the awakening. Vincennes Cathedral had two priests, one of them Rev. Celestine de la Hailandiere. An-

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Bruté, *Catholic Telegraph*, iv., pp. 317, 349, 437; in *Berichte der Leopoldinen-Stiftung*; Alerding, "History of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Vincennes," Indianapolis, 1883, pp. 124-145. *Catholic Diary*, vi., p. 167; *Pilot*, Aug. 6, 1836. Rev. G. Richard, Aug. 17, 1830.

other future bishop, Rev. Maurice de St. Palais, was at St. Mary's, and near him, at Black Oak Ridge, Vincennes's first native priest, Lalumière; there were two priests at Fort Wayne; Rev. Joseph Ferneding at Dover, Rev. Mr. Ruff at Peru, Rev. Messrs. St. Cyr and Schaeffer at Chicago. Bishop Bruté himself felled the first tree for a church at Rivière au Chat.

Amid his labors the Bishop was summoned to attend the Provincial Council to be held at Baltimore in April, 1837. While crossing Ohio by stage he was forced to ride outside, and, exposed to the bleak March winds, took a heavy cold, which finally settled on his lungs. He was too earnest and energetic to be delayed by this, but kept on and took part in the proceedings of the Council. As it was his first attendance at any of these solemn gatherings of the episcopal body, he pronounced his solemn profession of faith. He returned to resume his usual labors visiting the northern part of his diocese during the summer; but he had to deplore losses. Rev. Mr. Desseilles, the devoted priest, died amid the hardships of his Indian mission, leaving no one versed in their language to succeed him; and the amiable Rev. Bernard Schaeffer, one of those who accompanied him from France, expired at Chicago.<sup>1</sup>

The next year, though his health and strength were visibly waning, Bishop Bruté, on the 27th of April, set out on another visitation to Washington, where a large brick church was under roof; St. Peter's, Rev. Mr. Neyron's new brick church at the Knobs, confirming three generations in one family; Madison, where Rev. Mr. Shaw was building a large stone

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<sup>1</sup> Alerding, "History of the Diocese of Vincennes," pp. 266, 338, 346, 381, 444; Catholic Herald, v., pp. 319, 407.

church ; New Albany, where Catholics were ready to build, and where Sisters of Charity from Nazareth had succeeded those of Loretto. After a short rest at Vincennes, he was again devoting himself to his flock. He dedicated St. Peter's Church in Franklin County, churches at New Alsace and Blue Creek. He visited St. Francisville, blessing the church on the bluff overlooking the Wabash ; the little flock at Paris, and the German congregation in Jasper County, Illinois. The devoted priest, Rev. Vincent Bacquelin, welcomed him at Shelbyville, but was killed by a fall from his horse while attending a sick call some years later. At Terre Haute he found a large brick church nearly completed by Rev. S. Buteux, a priest of a family which gave a martyr to Canada in the heroic days of the Jesuit missions. Rev. Mr. Shaw was building St. Michael's Church at Madison and St. Vincent's was advancing at Prescott. His visitation extended over 1450 miles.

Bishop Bruté's health was now failing very rapidly ; his strength yielded to the disease, but not his will. After retiring for a time to Bardstown to recuperate, he visited places where his presence or even that of a priest was needed, often attending sick calls, when feebler than those to whom he ministered. Not long before his death, while in a distant part of his diocese, he actually fainted on his way to the bedside of a patient. On Trinity Sunday he celebrated the thirty-first anniversary of his first mass, being assisted on that occasion by two of his clergy, who supported him at the altar.

When he was at last compelled to keep his bed, his devotion increased, and he edified all by his piety and by his patience. Conformity to the will of God, devotion to our Lady were his chief themes. His correspondence he continued, whenever he could sit up



writing, even on the day of his death. He received the last sacraments with the utmost humility and devotion. He directed the prayers for the departing to be recited, answering fervently and devoutly, and on the 26th of June, 1839, surrendered his soul into the hands of his Creator. He was interred in the sanctuary of the Cathedral, but the next year his remains were placed behind the altar, a tablet on the wall recording his life and labors.

His death was deplored by his immediate flock as that of a benefactor and a father. Throughout the churches in the United States there was a general feeling that a great loss had been sustained. "The glorious life that he had led, for it was truly so, grew brighter as it hastened to its close. The eminent virtues he had practiced so long fortified his spirit, and he departed amid the tears of the living, to be united to Him whom he loved so purely from his youth."

The decline of life is generally that of rest and retirement. Dr. Bruté spent years in a seminary college amid the mountains, known by his virtues, his piety, his devotedness to the Church, and his zeal for souls, but rarely mingling in the busy world. From this he was drawn, at the age of fifty-five, to take charge of two large States, more as a missionary, a steward, a provider, than as a bishop. His unparalleled exertions and toilsome journeys soon terminated his career.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bishop Bruté, Jan. 25, 1837, April 16, 1838; April 30, 1839. Truth Teller, xiv., pp. 215, 317; Alerding, pp. 351, 382, 417. Catholic Advocate, lii., p. 155, 236. Catholic Herald, vii., p. 227. "Memoirs of the Rt. Rev. Simon Wm. Gabriel Bruté, D.D., first Bishop of Vincennes; with sketches describing his recollections of scenes connected with the French Revolution," New York, 1860, 1876. Charles Bruté de Rémur, "Vie de Mgr. Bruté de Rémur, premier Evêque de Vincennes," Rennes, 1887. McCaffrey, "Discourse on the Rt. Rev. Simon Gabriel Bruté, D.D., Bishop of Vincennes, pronounced in Mount St. Mary's Church, August 19, 1839," Emmitsburg, 1839.



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Bishop Bréhé, Jan. 25, 1837; April 16, 1838; April 30, 1839. *Tracts*, Vol. XIV., pp. 235, 317; *Annals*, pp. 351, 382, 417. *Catholic A.C.S.*, 1839, p. 11; 55, 236. *Catholic Herald*, vii., p. 227. "Memoirs of the Rt. Rev. Simon Wm. Gabriel Bréhé, D.D., first Bishop of Vincennes, with sketches of writing his publications of scenes connected with the French Revolution," New York, 1860, 1876. Charles Bruté de *Launay*, "Vie de M. Bréhé de Rouen, premier Evêque de Vincennes," *Besançon*, 1857. McCaffrey, "Discourse on the Rt. Rev. Simon Gabriel Bréhé, D.D., Bishop of Vincennes, pronounced in Mount St. Mary's Chapel, August 19, 1839," Fairmount, 1839.



LEONARD S. FERRIS

FIRST BISHOP OF VINCENNES, IND.




On the death of Bishop Bruté the administration devolved for a time on V. Rev. Simon P. Lalumière, of St. Simon's Church, who continued to reside at Washington, governing the diocese wisely. He was a native of Indiana, born at Vincennes in 1804, trained in his seminary by Bishop David, and from an early period connected with the Indiana missions. As early as 1828 he visited the Catholics in Daviess County, and built St. Mary's Church in 1834. He welcomed Bishop Bruté to Vincennes, and was his constant fellow-laborer, visiting one part of the diocese when the Bishop did another. He formed many congregations and labored faithfully, seeking no fame or earthly reward. He died June 9, 1857, while pastor of St. Joseph's Church, Terre Haute.<sup>1</sup>

Two of the pioneer priests, Rev. Messrs. Deseilles and Neyron, repose at Notre Dame, which promises to be our Westminster Abbey.

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<sup>1</sup> Alerding, p. 458 ; pp. 128, 252, 416, 490.

*Simon Bruté*  
*of Vincennes*



SIGNATURE OF BISHOP BRUTÉ.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### DIOCESE OF VINCENNES.

RT. REV. CELESTINE RENÉ LAWRENCE GUYNEMER DE LA HAILANDIERE, SECOND BISHOP, 1839-1843.

At the time of the death of Bishop Bruté, his Vicar-General and proposed Coadjutor, Rev. Mr. Hailandiere, was laboring energetically in France in the interest of the diocese, having been sent over by the Bishop, after some labors, on the mission in Indiana. On the 17th of May bulls were issued electing him Bishop of Axiern and Coadjutor of Vincennes. Almost at the same time he received tidings of the death of the saintly Bruté. Appalled at the responsibility thus suddenly devolved upon him, he sought advice and, yielding to the judgment of others, he was consecrated, August 18, 1839, in the Chapel of the Sacred Heart, Paris, by Rt. Rev. Forbin-Janson, assisted by Mgr. Blanquart de Bailleul, Bishop of Versailles, and Mgr. LeMercier, Bishop of Beauvais. He sent over to Indiana a number of clerical students and several priests, with vestments, church plate, and books. He induced the Eudists to undertake a college at Vincennes, and the Society of the Holy Cross to send over a colony of Brothers. The Sisters of Providence, at Ruille, also agreed to send over six selected Sisters to found an establishment of their community in his diocese. Having effected all this, he set out for Vincennes, where he arrived on the 14th of November. He was solemnly installed in the Cathedral on the



**RT. REV. CELESTINE DE LA HAILANDIERE,  
SECOND BISHOP OF VINCENNES.**





next Sunday, by the Bishop of St. Louis, who preached on the occasion.<sup>1</sup>

The second Bishop of Vincennes was born at Combourg, France, May 2, 1798, and was ordained at Paris in May, 1825. After ten years experience as Vicar, he came to the United States with Bishop Bruté in 1836. One of his first cares was to appease a schism at Chicago, and he succeeded where others failed. He gave an impulse to the college opened by the Eudists, under Rev. Father Bellier, and stimulated the erection of churches. In 1840 he dedicated the church at Terre Haute, and, within two years, saw others begun at Mullhausen and Indianapolis, Columbus, Buenavista, Lawrenceburg, Ferdinand, and Jasper, as well as St. Wendel's and St. Joseph's, in Vandenberg County, and another dedicated under the same saint's name in Dearborn County.<sup>2</sup>

Bishop de la Hailandiere was by consecration the youngest of the prelates who attended the Baltimore Council in May, 1840. There he impressed his fellow-bishops by his ability, zeal, and personal merit.

In 1841, in a letter to the Propaganda, he estimated the population of his diocese at twenty-five to thirty-five thousand, attended by thirty-three priests, with a steady growth by births, conversions, and immigration.

The next year those who believed hostility to the Church dissipated in Indiana, were rudely awakened from their delusion. Churches, convents, and colleges had been burned down elsewhere, but hatred of the priesthood had never yet gone so far as to form a suc-

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<sup>1</sup> Notes of Bishop de la Hailandiere; Alerding, p. 162, etc.; Catholic Advocate, iv., p. 354.

<sup>2</sup> Freeman's Journal, i., p. 110; Alerding; Catholic Advocate, vii., pp. 210, 310.

cessful conspiracy to send an innocent clergyman to state prison on a fearful charge. In May, 1842, Rev. Roman Weinzœpfen, the priest stationed at Evansville, was arrested on a cunningly devised accusation of crime. The local editor, evidently a party to the plot, fanned the flame and led an outcry. The Grand Jury found an indictment, and, on the trial, legal ability and clear evidence availed naught; the court and jury, prejudiced against the unfortunate priest, found him guilty. When the prison doors closed upon him, there came a revulsion; the evidence of the infamous character of the chief witness and of the plot, as well the weakness of the whole case, became so apparent that public opinion, shamed to a sense of justice, spoke so loudly and openly for the relief of this victim of perjury and conspiracy, that his prison doors were flung open.<sup>1</sup>

When Pope Gregory XVI. granted a universal jubilee to enlist the prayers of the faithful throughout the world in behalf of unhappy Spain, Dr. Hailandiere proclaimed it by his pastoral, July 2, 1842. The exercises of the jubilee became a series of missions.

Bishop Bruté, it will be remembered, visited the tenantless establishments of Rev. Mr. Badin. The neighboring Indian missions, continued by Rev. Mr. Desseilles till his death, were taken up by Rev. B. Petit, who accompanied his Indians when they were forcibly removed by the United States government. The effort was beyond his strength, and he died of hardship and

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<sup>1</sup> Bishop de la Hailandiere to the Propaganda, September 29, 1841. *Catholic Advocate*, vii., pp. 126-151, x., p. 38; *Alerding*, p. 171; *Stenographic Report of the Trial and Conviction of Priest Weinzœpfen*, Louisville, 1844; *U. S. Cath. Magazine*, iii., p. 263; *Catholic Cabinet*, ii., pp. 61, 751; *Catholic Herald*, x., p. 173; xii., p. 98. Bishop de la Hailandiere to Rev. J. Timon, June 25, 1844.

grief.<sup>1</sup> The land was thus become a desert. Dr. de la Hailandiere offered the grounds at Sainte Marie des Lacs to Rev. Edward Sorin, a young priest who had just established St. Peter's community of Brothers of the Holy Cross at Vincennes. Rev. Father Sorin reached the lakes on the 26th of November, 1842. The old log hut, the decaying fences, the snow-clad prairie, the frozen lake, did not seem to promise success for any attempt to establish a college there; but that was the condition under which he was to obtain it. He resolutely undertook the work. In the month of February he removed to Notre Dame du Lac, as it was henceforward to be called. A log church was soon

*+ Ed Bp of Vinc*

SIGNATURE OF BISHOP DE LA HAILANDIERE.

erected, and contracts made for brick and lumber to erect a college. In the summer three priests arrived, and three Sisters of the Holy Cross came to found a convent and academy. Thus began the wonderful institutions at Notre Dame, Indiana.<sup>2</sup>

There was activity throughout the diocese, but it was excessive. Though Bishop de la Hailandiere held a synod, preceded by a retreat of his clergy, he found that his efforts excited discontent. He proceeded to Baltimore to attend the fifth Provincial Council disheartened and discouraged.

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<sup>1</sup> Catholic Advocate, iv., pp. 53, 354; Catholic Herald, vii., p. 93.

<sup>2</sup> Lyons, "Silver Jubilee of the University of Notre Dame," Chicago, 1869; Catholic Cabinet, ii., p. 570; Salzbacher, "Meine Reise nach Nord Amerika," p. 231.