

## John Cardinal Heenan:

From Honolulu I flew to San Francisco where I was met by Father Wallace. An Irishman ordained for the diocese of Los Angeles, he had been prevented by the war from taking up duty. He had joined the British army as a chaplain but was soon discharged as unsuitable. He was an organist of genius and hyper-sensitive as musicians often are. This was the chief reason why he always managed to fall out with every superior. He was neither rebellious nor wayward but he took offence at the slightest opposition or rebuke. In himself he was gentle and lovable. When eventually he reached Los Angeles he became depressed, felt harshly treated and soon returned to Ireland. I had first met him when he was doing duty as a curate in Ilford where my mother lived. Having two sons priests she always kept open house for the clergy. Young priests far from home found in her a willing substitute for their own mothers. She was just what Peter Wallace needed when, inevitably, he fell out with the bishop, parish priest and all the local clergy. After a scene he would go to my mother's house, play the piano, have a cup of tea and calm down. All this time he was worried because he knew that his proper place was in Los Angeles, the diocese to which canonically he was bound (incardinated). The difficulty was that the diocese of Los Angeles refused to have him back.

In the summer of 1947 I had gone to the United States before taking up my work with the Catholic Missionary Society. While I was in New York Cardinal Griffin had come from England to see Cardinal Spellman. I was invited to lunch at Archbishop's House where I met one of the New York auxiliary bishops named McIntyre. In the course of conversation I told Bishop McIntyre of the plight of Peter Wallace. I explained that he was a good zealous priest but a victim of his musician's temperament. I asked if he would make a plea for Peter when next he wrote to his friend, the Archbishop of Los Angeles. He kept his word but the Archbishop died before he had the chance of replying. The successor who was appointed with unaccustomed speed was none other than Bishop McIntyre. As Cardinal McIntyre he became well known after the Vatican Council for his efforts to save nuns from destroying themselves by abandoning their vows, constitutions and religious habits. This was regarded by the liberal press as unpardonable interference with religious freedom. Bishop McIntyre was no more successful in saving Peter Wallace than in his later attempt to save his nuns. Peter, of course, was invited back by the new archbishop. Fellow priests in the Catholic Missionary Society helped me to buy Peter a ticket to Los Angeles. He was so grateful that not only did he repay the money but all during the severe post-war rationing he used to send food parcels to the Mission House in Hampstead. It was this same feeling of indebtedness which led Peter to come all the way from Los Angeles to meet me in San Francisco. Unfortunately by this time he had begun to fall out with his brother clergy again. Not long after this visit I lost touch with him. He left the Church some years before it became fashionable to do so. No doubt God who created the angelic choirs will judge a musician with special indulgence.

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