Message From the Chairman

Back in 1976, the United States had many grand celebrations to commemorate the bicentennial of our country. There were parades and fireworks and all kinds of ceremonies to mark this great anniversary.

That same year, the bishops of the United States issued a document commemorating this anniversary and strongly suggesting that each diocese should establish an archives as well as appoint an archivist. Here in New Jersey, the bishops of our state went even further. They established a commission under the chairmanship of Bishop John J. Dougherty to research and produce histories of the Catholic Church in New Jersey. It was composed of a representative from each of our dioceses and some historical scholars also became members.

This group is now known as the New Jersey Catholic Historical Commission. Down through the years it has been meeting at regular intervals and has discussed various ways to make our Catholic history better known to our fellow Jerseyites. This commission has produced many study days to help parishes write their histories, and several of our dioceses have published their own histories with its assistance. Very early on, it also published a newsletter under the direction of the late Professor Joseph Mahoney. He was able to get many articles about our history and present them to its readers.

Of late, this newsletter has not been published as regularly as we wished. However, we hope to get back on track with this issue of this publication, which we are calling *The Recorder*. This current issue has stories about our several dioceses that should be of interest to everyone, including one article about the diary of our first bishop, Bishop James Roosevelt Bayley; a history of the progress of Catholic publications from the time of Gutenberg to the present; and other items of interest. I urge all of you to read this issue and if you have any comments or helpful suggestions, please feel free to contact us.

Rev. Msgr. Francis R. Seymour, KHS
Chairman of the New Jersey Catholic Historical Commission