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Abstract

Matthew Beovich was the Roman Catholic archbishop of Adelaide from 1939 to 1971. This thesis explores how his life was shaped by the Catholic Church, and how he in turn was influential in its development. The main aim is not so much to use his life story as a prism for viewing Catholicism in South Australia, as it is to investigate what it meant to be a bishop in this period.

An introductory chapter gives a brief overview of the evolution of the office of bishop in the Catholic tradition and considers issues to do with episcopal biography. Chapter 2 traces Matthew Beovich's upbringing in Melbourne from 1896 to 1917. Chapter 3 focuses on his clerical studies in Rome from 1917 to 1923. After his return as a priest to the archdiocese of Melbourne, he played a significant role in the development of the Catholic education system. This is examined in Chapter 4.

As Beovich was appointed archbishop of Adelaide at the beginning of the Second World War, how he fulfilled his public role is considered in Chapter 5. The following chapter concentrates on matters of internal diocesan administration in the 1940s. A particular problem he encountered in that decade, sexual abuse at a Catholic orphanage, is confronted in Chapter 7. His initial support for B.A. Santamaria's Catholic Social Studies Movement is investigated in Chapter 8, along with the remnant for his later opposition.

In many respects, Catholicism seemed to flourish in the 1950s. Chapter 9 focuses on that decade. Beovich's participation in the Second Vatican Council from 1962 to 1965 is the subject of the following chapter. Chapter 11 examines how Beovich implemented Conciliar reforms in his diocese in the wake of the Council, along with his response to the upheavals of the 1960s.

Beovich retired at the age of seventy-five in 1971, one of the first Australian bishops to do so in accordance with the policy introduced by Pope Paul VI in 1966. How he fulfilled the new role of emeritus archbishop in the final decade of his life is examined in Chapter 12.