

St. Bernard's Seminary



Entrance to St. Bernard's Seminary

With the words " . . . We have known that you have always given chief care to the right education of the young, especially of those dedicated to God; and it is nothing of more benefit to the Church than to have the Holy Father referred to the Main Seminary of St. Bernard's, on the occasion of the British anniversary of the . . ."

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between the city and Lake Ontario and, on the high western bank of the Genesee river.

The site of the seminary is unrivalled in Rochester, abundant water, dry soil and perfect drainage make it ideal from the point of view of health.

The entrance to the grounds is attractive. The stone walk leads between the huge piers of mottled sandstone

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TWO YEARS after the founding of the new diocese of Rochester, September 15, 1870 to be exact, Bishop McQuaid, first bishop of Rochester, opened Saint Andrew's Seminary in a very humble building in the rear of the episcopal residence. The first faculty was made up of priests attached to the Cathedral and its first student body numbered about seven or eight young men.

Other and better buildings followed, all in practically the same location. The student body increased and finally St. Andrew's was given a distinct faculty of priests whose sole work was the preparation of boys and young men for the priesthood. In 1937 the last building erected for seminary purposes was sold to the Eastman Kodak Co. and temporary quarters were taken up in the old Catholic High School building at Brown Street and Plymouth Avenue North.

Of recent years State recognition has been obtained for both the high school and college departments of the seminary necessitating increased courses, facilities in library and laboratory, special training for faculty, etc.

Monsignor De Regge was first rector of Saint Andrew's Seminary and he was followed by Monsignor Michael Nolan, Father Francis Luddy, and Father Edward Lyons present rector. The average student body of recent years numbers 125—about 40 in the college department and 85 in the high school department.

Practically all the priests in the diocese are alumni of Saint Andrew's, which also numbers among its former graduates Archbishop Hickey, now retired; Bishop Walter A. Kelly, bishop of Syracuse; and the late Bishop John Francis O'Hern.

The graduates of Saint Andrew's Seminary are out-ranked by no others at Saint Bernard's Seminary in scholastic standing, and in true evidences of piety and priestly spirit and attitude. During the past ten years over thirty of its student body have joined the various religious orders.

In 1929 a dormitory was added to the seminary, for non-resident students, and in 1936 quarters for these students were opened on the Buffalo Road in a beautiful building on spacious grounds. About twenty students make their home at this dormitory—the Saint William House.

Boys and young men are accepted at Saint Andrew's from the parochial schools and high schools of the diocese provided they meet the requirements of the present standard at Saint Andrew's. An entrance examination is held each summer to determine the incoming class.

to the massive arches which front the entrance to the seminary. In the center of the broad walk is a large fountain. Entering the grounds from either side is a driveway which passes across the pavement under the arches of the entrance tower. Three full stories rise above the basement to the roof, which is of red slate, and partaking a little of the mansard style, admits of a large attic above the third floor.

The seminary buildings are four in number, comprising the residence hall, this being the largest and finest of the buildings, and through which the entrance to the others is best obtained, the chapel and culinary building, the quarters of the servants and Sisters and the electric and steam power house.

In June of 1906 Bishop McQuaid, in a pastoral letter, decided to add another building to St. Bernard's Seminary in addition to the four buildings which constitute the group, viz., the main building, the chapel building, the building for the Sisters in charge of the domestic department and their assistants and the "Hall of Philosophy and Science."

The new building referred to is what is now known as the "Hall of Theology" and is of stone, brick, concrete and iron 200 feet by 55 with basement and five stories high. Work progressed favorably during the summer of 1907 and in the month of September of that year the basement and four stories of the building had been completed, and, said the Bishop "the enlarged chapel and dining room will be in order by the latter part of this month" (September, 1907). The building was finished in time for the opening of fall school term in 1907. There are rooms for 150 students and five professors, as well as class rooms and a large assembly hall.

St. Bernard's day, August 20, 1908, the day set apart for the formal dedication of the new building (hall of theology) and the day which marked the Bishop McQuaid's diamond jubilee and the attainment of the ambition of almost a lifetime on the part of Rochester's illustrious Bishop, found him physically unfit, except for two brief periods; the beginning and the conclusion of the ceremonies, to be present during the ceremonies which marked this great event. Bishop McQuaid was confined to his bed, almost within earshot of the celebration ceremonies.

Dignitaries of the Catholic Church from this and other lands, headed by the papal delegate, Most Rev. Diomede Falconio, the celebrant of the Mass, came here for the ceremonies, constituting what was perhaps the most notable gathering of Catholic clergy ever held in this diocese.

Having built the seminary buildings, Bishop McQuaid now directed his attention to the building up of high scholastic and spiritual standards for those who would study there. He provided for the complete training of the instructors and for the maintenance of a high level of scholarship; he saw to the establishment of strict but prudent discipline; by careful supervision and by personal conferences he provided for the proper spiritual training of the seminarians.

Among the original members of the faculty were Rev. Wm. E. Cowen, D. D., professor of dogmatic theology and English literature, Rev. J. Francis Goggin, D. D., prefect of studies and professor of exegesis, moral theology and Italian; Rev. William E. Cowen, D. D., professor of fundamental dogmatic theology and ethics; Rev. Edward J. Byrne, D. D., professor of general and special introduction to sacred scripture, history of the old and new Testament and Hebrew; Rev. Andrew V. Byrne, professor of fundamental moral theology and ethics; Rev. Andrew B. Meehan, D. D., J. U. D., director and professor of canon law, liturgy and Italian; Rev. Frederick J. Zwierlein, S. T. L., professor of ecclesiastical history and German literature; Rev. Edmund J. Wirth, D. D., professor of special metaphysics; Rev. Michael J. Ryan, D. D., professor of logic, general metaphysics and English literature; Rev. John M. Potter, S. T. B., professor of church music and German; Rev. P. Prosper Libert, S. T. B., librarian, professor of catechetics and French literature; Dr. L. F. Simpson, attending physician.

The Seminary has a curriculum of the type approved by Roman authorities. Its course is six years long. The first two years, equivalent to the two last years of a college course, are devoted principally to the study of Philosophy. The Seminary is qualified to give the degree of Bachelor of Arts to those who have entered with satisfactory credits and complete successfully these two years. The next four years are occupied with the study of Dogmatic and Moral Theology, Sacred Scripture, and auxiliary courses. Upon the successful completion of these four years the student is ready for ordination to the priesthood.

St. Bernard's Seminary has already given 1137 priests to the service of the Church. The first year of its existence saw 39 students enrolled; the greatest enrollment since was 257. Last year there were 231 enrolled, representing 14 dioceses.

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