

Development of the Catholic faith in Western New York—of which founding the Diocese of Rochester was a monumental incident—was one of the great events in the making of America.

Looking through the shadows of the past out of which this diocese emerged, we see the immortal Most Rev. Bernard J. McQuaid, first Bishop and architect of the diocese—builder of churches, colleges, seminaries, schools, cemeteries in a panorama of forty years.

His name is synonymous with the founding.

Beyond the colossal figure of the great administrator, appears the saintly Bishop John Timon of Buffalo, his predecessor in this region when it was a part of the Diocese of Buffalo.

"Pray for me" was the way in which he always said good-bye to visitor or friend—perhaps preparing the way for what was to follow.

WORK BEGUN

But long before Bishop McQuaid began his notable work of extending a spiritual empire and providing the physical properties for it—long before Bishop Timon fell upon his knees to ask for the extension of the Catholic Church over the territory in which he was spiritual administrator—the foundation had been laid for the Diocese of Rochester.

Expansion of the Catholic faith in this region goes back 283 years—to the year 1636 when Jesuit missionaries raised the Cross in Ontario County as the emblem of the Christian faith.

The fires of faith which they lighted burned dimly at times. But they lived and spread in the hearts of men. Many of them were Indians.

Occasionally an altar was erected in a Catholic home, and Mass was celebrated. Up to 1808 the Catholic Churches in New York State were governed by church authorities in New York City—placed there by the Most Rev. John Carroll, first Bishop of Baltimore, which was the Mother See of the entire United States.

Priests who came to New York—most of them from foreign countries—were sent throughout the state, to celebrate Mass in isolated communities, to provide for the spiritual needs of families and individuals.

NEW DIOCESE FORMED

When, in 1808, the progress of the Catholic Church in the United States warranted division of the Diocese of Baltimore, New York was one of the dioceses created, with the Most Rev. Richard Luke Concanen, an Irish Dominican, the first Bishop.

But he died soon afterward. The Most Rev. John Connolly, who was named as his successor, coming directly from Ireland on a voyage which lasted sixty-eight days, made an inspection of the whole diocese as early as possible.

Rochester had only a few hundred families at the time, and there were only four priests in his charge, which included all of the state of New York and a part of New Jersey.

Before the time of railroads—with only the slowest means of transportation—the inspection was itself a tedious, slow job.

Priests were sent by Bishop Connolly to Rochester and Buffalo during 1818 and 1819. The first to arrive was the Rev. Patrick McCormick, administering to the Catholics of Rochester.

Next was the Rev. Patrick Kelly, who was ordained by Bishop Connolly, and who devoted most of his labors to Rochester and Buffalo.

During his pastorate in Rochester, the first Catholic Church—St. Patrick's—was built in this city.

Although there were only fifteen Catholics in Rochester in 1808, the number had increased

The Diocese of Rochester and Its Churches

to 1,300 by 1820—a great influx of settlers which had been due to the construction of a highway that was opened the year before, running across the state.

When Bishop DuBois, who had escaped to America during the French Revolution, was named successor of Bishop Connolly upon the death of the latter, there were 150,000 Catholics, eight priests and twelve churches in the Diocese.

Patrick Henry, famous orator, had instructed him in the English language, enhancing great natural gifts for public speaking. After many achievements, including the founding of St. Mary's College, he was made titular Bishop of Basilopolis in 1838.

The Rev. John Hughes of Philadelphia was named to succeed him—and in 1850 was raised to the dignity of the first Archbishop of New York.

During 1842 a census showed 200,000 Catholics in the state of New York, with only forty priests and fifty churches.

On April 23, 1847, Archbishop Hughes erected Buffalo into an Episcopal See, which included all of the region now within the Diocese of Rochester—nearly one third of the state of New York in all.

BISHOP OF BUFFALO

The Very Rev. John Timon, a Visitor General of the Congregation of Missions, was consecrated as the first Bishop of Buffalo.

Following the consecration, which took place at the Cathedral in New York October 17, 1847, the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, on October 22, he took charge of his See. It is a noteworthy fact that he pontificated at his first Mass at St. Patrick's Church in Rochester on the very morning when that historic event took place.

Not only did Bishop Timon perform valiant service in development of the Diocese of Buffalo, but he gave material aid in the formation of the Diocese of Rochester. One of his first official acts was the appointment of the Rev. Bernard O'Reilly as pastor of St. Patrick's Church in Rochester.

There was a discouraging scarcity of priests.

SPEEDY GROWTH

The Catholic population was growing speedily because of the waves of immigration sweeping into the land of opportunity and religious liberty.

This was not only true of Rochester and Buffalo, but also in remote communities, where Catholic families, who had worshipped devoutly while in their former homes, but were here denied the ministrations of priests because there were not enough to serve them.

Bishop Timon prayed steadfastly for them.

His interest in the spiritual welfare of Catholics of the present Diocese of Rochester was continuous, profound.

Formation of the Diocese of Rochester took place on January 24, 1868, through its separation from the See of Buffalo.

The Most Rev. Bernard J. McQuaid was consecrated as its first Bishop by Archbishop McCloskey at the Cathedral in New York, July 12, 1868.

DAY OF JOY

When he came to Rochester four days later, the occasion was made one of great public rejoicing—appreciation of distinguished recognition which had come to the city and this region.

At that time there were only sixty churches administered by thirty-eight priests in the diocese. Seven were Redemptorists who were included in a territory embracing Monroe, Livingston, Wayne, Ontario, Seneca, Cayuga, Yates and Tompkins counties.

Archbishop Hughes, great administrator in building the province of the church in the state, had the pattern which Bishop McQuaid decided to follow in the new diocese—poor, lacking in educational facilities for the priesthood as well as for others.

Within the space of a few years, Bishop McQuaid had made the Rochester Diocese one of the notable dioceses of the country—a center of education, supplying priests for this and other communities.

DIOCESE ENLARGED

Through action of the Holy Father, Leo XIII, the Diocese of Rochester was enlarged on December 10, 1896, through separation of the counties of Steuben, Chemung, Tioga and Schuyler from the Diocese of Buffalo and adding them to its territory.

To an exceptional degree, the story of its development for the forty years following 1868 was the story of Bishop McQuaid's life.

He was born in New York City December 15, 1823, educated at Chamblay College, near Montreal and at St. John's College, Fordham. He studied theology under Lazarist Fathers in their seminary in New York.

He was ordained a priest at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City, January 16, 1848, and his first assignment was at Madison, N. J. Immediately he began building churches, making provision for parochial schools.

Congregations were organized by him at Morristown and Springfield. Then he was called to the rectorship of the Cathedral at Newark, and while there was instrumental in founding Seton Hall College. He was its president for ten years.

ADEQUATELY PREPARED

Forty-five years of age when he came, with twenty years of that time spent as a priest, he was admirably equipped by nature and experience to undertake the work of building a diocese.

Immediately he began organizing the parochial school system. There was only one Irish Catholic school for secondary education in the city at the time—the Academy of Christian Brothers, which only admitted boys whose parents were able to pay.

Bishop McQuaid wanted a more democratic system—one which as boys; the poor as well as those with means. He began a movement for "Christian free schools," advocating them in lectures in other cities as well as at home.

TRIBUTE TO HIS WORK

The rapid growth of the parochial school system in the diocese was a tribute to his work. The Sisters of St. Joseph were organized for teaching, and each of these sisters was given as many pupils as could be taught.

The merit of the plan was quickly demonstrated in the quality of scholarship of the students, as well as the fine moral character of the young charges.

Recognizing the need for more priests—and the necessity for training them—Bishop McQuaid established St. Andrew's Seminary in 1870, an institution in which

young men who are anxious to enter the priesthood may be given a preparatory course.

He decreed that they should attend a day school there during the classical course, so that they would not be cut off from the world while making up their minds whether they would later take the theological course leading to the priesthood.

The seminary succeeded from the first.

SEMINARY PLANNED

Then he took steps for establishment of a theological seminary, beginning in 1875 to provide resources for that purpose. Studies and plans were made, with the result that construction of St. Bernard's Seminary was started March 31, 1891, and the building was dedicated July 12, 1893.

It consisted of the main building, the chapel building and the building for Sisters. The Hall of Philosophy and Science was erected later. The seminary was opened in September, 1893.

A strong faculty was provided. Educational results surpassed expectations—in 1901 received unusual recognition, for a diocesan seminary. In a Papal brief which was presented to St. Bernard's in perpetuity, authority was given to confer degrees in philosophy and theology.

Then, in 1872, Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, consisting of 400 acres, was opened by Bishop McQuaid in Charlotte Boulevard—a common cemetery for all Catholics.

To provide a source of unadulterated wine for the Holy sacrifice of the Mass, he purchased a farm of 215 acres at Conesus, and in its vineyard grew more than thirty varieties of grapes. The vineyard was presented to St. Bernard's Seminary.

LIST OF ACHIEVEMENTS

Other notable achievements included the establishment of St. Ann's Home for aged Catholics, which was opened in Charlotte Boulevard in 1905. The Hall of Theology of St. Bernard's Seminary was opened in 1908.

Actively interested in civic affairs, Bishop McQuaid had a notable part in creation of the splendid park system of the city of Rochester.

When the years began to weigh heavily upon Bishop McQuaid, the Rev. Thomas F. Hickey was appointed Coadjutor Bishop; consecrated May 24, 1905, assuming most of the administrative duties of the diocese from then on.

Both Vicar General and Rector of the Cathedral at the time, he became titular Bishop of Berenice and coadjutor with the right of succession as head of the See of Rochester.

The ceremony of consecration, which took place at the Cathedral, was one of the most memorable in Catholic annals here—a ceremony attended by a distinguished church dignitaries, prelates and churchmen from all parts of the country.

He was the first Bishop to be consecrated in Rochester.

The Most Rev. John M. Farley, Archbishop of New York was in charge of the ceremony of consecration, assisted by Bishop McQuaid, who had ordained his coadjutor to the priesthood.

PAPAL DELEGATE PRESENT

The Most Rev. Diomedes Falconio, Papal delegate to the United States, came as the representative of the Holy Father.

The aged mother of the Bishop-elect occupied a place in a front

pew which had been reserved for the family.

Bishop Hickey was born in Rochester in 1861, graduated from St. Mary's parochial school in 1874, and three months later entered St. Andrew's Seminary, from which he was graduated in 1879. In 1884 he was graduated from St. Joseph's Provincial Seminary at Troy, N. Y.

Following ordination he was appointed assistant at St. Francis de Sales Church, Geneva and later transferred to Moravia.

For a time he was chaplain of the State Industrial School, then made rector of St. Mary's Church. He became rector of the Cathedral in 1898 and was chosen Vicar General in June, 1900.

When the venerable Bishop McQuaid had been head of the See of Rochester for forty years, a Grand Jubilee Celebration was held on the anniversary, which was July 12, 1908. His 85th birthday was December 15, 1908.

LIFE ENDS

The following year—after an illness lasting six months—he died on January 18, 1909. The greatest tributes which the Church and the city could pay to his memory were given.

There was a guard of honor while his body lay in state at the Cathedral; honorary bearers included the most eminent citizens of this community, members of all creeds; people united in expressions of sorrow.

Archbishop John M. Farley of New York City celebrated Pontifical Mass of Requiem.

Bishop Hickey automatically succeeded Bishop McQuaid as head of the See of Rochester, the right of succession having been provided when he became coadjutor.

An able administrator who knew the needs of the diocese intimately, Bishop Hickey immediately began a development of the schools, churches and institutions.

CHURCH FOUNDED

His first important act in this direction was building the Italian church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Ontario Street in 1910. Then came the second Italian Church, St. Lucy's for the western part of the city of Rochester, located in Troup Street.

Not only in the establishment of new parishes and building churches, but in providing schools, Bishop Hickey kept the Church and its institutions in pace with the needs of the people.

Nazareth Academy, a school for girls established in 1871, was installed in a new home in Lake Avenue.

With a magnificent new building as its home, Aquinas Institute, of which Bishop Hickey is the founder, was erected in Dewey Avenue in 1925—developed out of the Rochester Catholic High School and Cathedral High School and providing facilities for 1,200 boys.

St. Bernard's Seminary had been heavily in debt since construction of Theology Hall and other buildings. Through the energy of Bishop Hickey, and with the contributions of parishes and people, the entire debt was paid off.

NAZARETH COLLEGE

Nazareth College for women was founded under the direction of Bishop Hickey in 1924, and is now located at 402 Augustine Street.

Because of the growth of educational institutions, a central Mother House for the Sisters of St. Joseph, as well as Normal School for the training of teachers, were imperative needs.

Property was purchased in Pittsford for construction of a beautiful building used for these purposes.

Churches constructed under the direction of Bishop Hickey in (Continued on Page 58)