BISHOP KEARNEY

A Biographical Sketch

His Excellency, the Most Rev. James E. Kearney, D. D. came to the charge of the Diocese of Rochester on Nov. 10, 1937. His official leave, first time that he had come home in Rochester, brought out a gathering of 12,000 persons to the New York Central station to greet the new Bishop of Rochester.

When the prelate appeared on the station balcony he was given spontaneous and prolonged applause. Rochester officials, civic leaders and a great throng of the laity had come to welcome Bishop Kearney to Rochester.

[illegible] congratulative message to [illegible] "God bless you all. God bless Rochester. God bless the Diocese of Rochester. God bless the Diocese state of New York."

From the time of the announcement on August 3 following the installation of the Most Rev. Edward Mooney as Archbishop of Detroit that His Holiness, Pope Pius XII had translated Bishop Kearney from the See of Salt Lake to the See of Rochester, Rochester eagerly awaited his coming.

The Rt. Rev. Msgr. William M. Hart, Administrator of the Diocese of Rochester, welcomed the new Ordinary in the brilliantly lighted railroad station and said:

"[illegible] came to be a leader of the religious and civic life of the community. You come to direct the forces of religion that mean [illegible] of our commonwealth. [illegible] to build more stately [illegible] on the foundations so [illegible] early men of God [illegible]

[illegible] welcome was extended by Mayor Charles Stanton. [illegible] Herbert H. Lehman was [illegible] by B. Emmett Finu[illegible]

[illegible] touched, Bishop Kearney [illegible] in his humble manner told [illegible]:

"[illegible] Kearney may appear [illegible] little. But I [illegible] in the name of God, [illegible] you have [illegible] tonight is to pay [illegible] as the representative [illegible]

[illegible] consider the occupant [illegible] position would [illegible] many Europeans [illegible] many, have [illegible] of [illegible] the American [illegible] this to [illegible] Ambassador of [illegible]

[illegible] authority his [illegible] the people [illegible] they ask [illegible] worthy of [illegible] given me."

[illegible]

license from the city of New York and taught in Public School 25 of that city from Feb. 2, 1903, to June of that year. He then entered St. Joseph's Seminary Dunwoodie.

Upon completing his work at St. Joseph's Seminary, the future Bishop, was ordained to the Holy Priesthood, September 19, 1908 and then spent a year in post graduate work at the Catholic University of America.

The first assignment after ordination was as assistant pastor of St. Cecilia's Church in New York where he served from 1909 to 1928 and in the latter year founded and became pastor of the Church of St. Francis Xavier in the Bronx where he remained three years.

During some of these years he lectured at Our Lady of Good Counsel College at White Plains, N. Y., where he was professor of apologetics and he also served as superintendent of Catholic schools in the Bronx.

Another of the great events of his life came on October 28, 1932 when he was consecrated to the episcopacy by his near and dear friend, the late Patrick Cardinal Hayes, Archbishop of New York, as the Bishop of the See of Salt Lake.

The occasion was memorable and joyous because the day marked his mother's birthday, his own birthday and the anniversary of the consecration of Cardinal Hayes.

The See of Salt Lake was one of the smallest in the country at that time. There were only 10,000 communicants in its churches, less than the number who joined in the welcome at the railroad station here—and 33 priests to carry on the work in 19 churches.

As in all missionary territory, funds were low.

Bishop Kearney entered upon his new work with the zeal and understanding leadership which the people of the Diocese of Rochester have since come to appreciate.

The Bishop was signally successful there in winning and retaining the loyal cooperation of others and made steady progress in developing churches, schools and charitable works of the diocese.

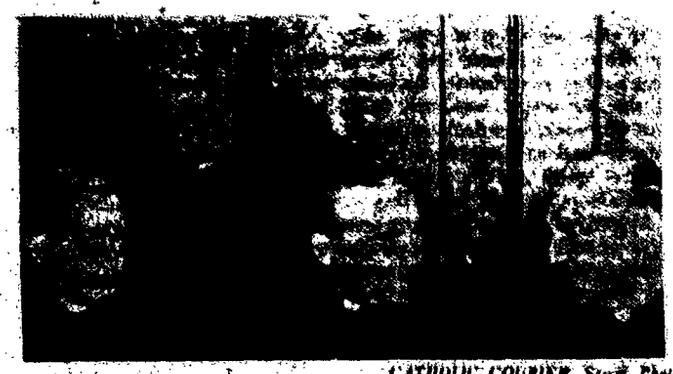
The slender resources available for this work were added to by aid from mission funds in New York City. In November 1936 Bishop Kearney paid off the last debt of the Cathedral of the Madeline and consecrated it on Thanksgiving Day, 1937.

The next momentous event in the life of Bishop Kearney came when he went to Detroit to attend the installation of the Most Rev. Edward Mooney as Archbishop of Detroit. Archbishop Mooney had been transferred from the Diocese of Rochester after James Faulkner was Bishop of this Diocese.

[illegible] and [illegible] been [illegible] the day of his installation [illegible] the [illegible] Cardinal [illegible] was the [illegible] Kearney, the many prominent [illegible] at that installation [illegible]

CATHOLIC COURIER Staff Photo

St. Michael's Parish—After celebrating a Solemn Pontifical Mass, His Excellency, Bishop Kearney is shown here imparting the episcopal blessing to parishioners, as the golden anniversary of the parish is marked.



CATHOLIC COURIER Staff Photo

Catholic Educators—Shown here with His Excellency, Bishop Kearney are Rev. Edward V. Stanford, O.S.A., President of Villanova; Rev. Hugh O'Donnell, C.S.C., President of Notre Dame; Rev. Joseph M. Noonan, C.M., President of Niagara, discussing the future of Catholic Education.

"I am very much delighted with the appointment, with the honor and with the confidence manifested by the Holy See.

"My only hope is to be a worthy successor of the outstanding group of prelates who have conferred such honor upon the See. To that end I humbly solicit the prayers of the priests, the religious and my good people of the See of Rochester."

It was on Armistice Day, 1937, following the historic welcome given at the station, that the Most Rev. James E. Kearney, D.D. was solemnly enthroned as Fifth Bishop of Rochester in the appropriately decorated Pro-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart.

Archbishops, Bishops, Monsignori, priests, members of religious orders, representatives of the various Societies, uniformed Knights of Columbus and Knights of St. John were present to participate in the colorful procession and ceremony.

Governor Herbert H. Lehman was there, with Mayor Charles Stanton representing the city and many men and women, prominent in the business, professional and social life of the city.

His Excellency, the Most Rev. Stephen J. Donahue, Auxiliary Bishop of New York and representative of His Eminence, Patrick Cardinal Hayes, was installing officer and the Rt. Rev. Msgr. William M. Hart, Vicar Capitular, gave the formal welcome.

The Solemn Pontifical Mass was celebrated by Bishop Donahue. Bishop Kearney retired to a side chapel for silent prayer before being escorted to the episcopal throne.

Then he acknowledged the presence of the four Archbishops — two of his predecessors here, Archbishop Hickey and Archbishop Mooney among them, — and the 26 Bishops and scores of Monsignori and priests. In his sermon, Bishop Kearney said:

"The respectful tribute of those outside my faith represents a tribute of respect and honor which a consistent follower of the lowly and humble Christ should tremble to accept were he not conscious that the tribute comes to the high and holy office which he today assumes as the Ambassador of Christ in this community."

Bishop Kearney said that the expression of thanks and appreciation "which my lips are eager to express at this time for all of you I must withhold for a more hallowed moment. At my first Mass in the See of Rochester, I shall speak to the Sacred Heart of my Master for all of you."

Speaking of the impression made by the tremendous interest shown in his arrival here, the Bishop said:

"It was not at all exclusively a Catholic interest, but people of all creeds and faiths have shown their interest to make me feel at home. I think it is indicative of a very definite religious sense in this community."

As in Salt Lake, so in Rochester, Bishop Kearney has won the friendship and esteem of his own flock and of those of other faiths.

The story of what has taken place here during the first three years of his reign is outlined elsewhere in this Diocesan Review and Calendarium.

Bishop Kearney had had a long personal acquaintance with the present Supreme Pontiff Pope Pius XII.

When in Utah on his visit to the United States, the then Eugenio Cardinal Pacelli, Papal Secretary of State met with Bishop Kearney in Salt Lake.

When he became the 262nd Pope to sit on the throne of St. Peter's, Bishop Kearney said of him from personal acquaintance:

"Pope Pius XII is a very holy man of deep, personal piety, a man of wide experience and knowledge of diplomatic matters and a man highly capable of handling the difficult problems of the present Pontificate."

The advancement of Catholic lay societies is uppermost in the mind of Bishop Kearney and on all occasions he gives freely of his time and talents in promoting the work of both men, women and children's groups.

For many years he has taken an active and influential part in the affairs of the Knights of Columbus and this year accepted the State Chaplaincy of the New York State Council. He was Faithful Friar of the Archbishop Hughes Assembly, Fourth Degree, Knights of Columbus, the patriotic section of the order, and this year will participate in the exemplification of the Fourth Degree on May 4 in Rochester. He has kindly allowed his name to be used in increasing the membership of many of the organizations.

He is a vital force in every organization of the Diocese of Rochester to which his energies are constantly devoted, one after the other, as he follows out his motto, "In Te Domine Speravi," "In Thee O Lord have I placed my hope."

THE EDS.