Tribute To Bishop Gibbons' 25 Years In Episcopacy

ALBANY, April 19—Complete text of sermon tribute to His Excellency, the Most Rev. Edmund F. Gibbons, D.D., Bishop of Albany, marking his Episcopal Silver Jubilee delivered by His Excellency, the Most Rev. James E. Kearney, D.D., Bishop of Rochester, in Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, here today.

"A son of Albany, after many years of absence, is returning to his old home, the happy home of his boyhood, to the dear and familiar scenes amid which he felt the first sacred impulses to enter the service of the sanctuary. In the time, be it long or short, that Providence leaves him here to labor, it will be his endeavor to make some return to God for all that He hath done for him, long ago in this dear old city on the hills, and during the years which have elapsed since his departure from it.

"To my dear fathers and brethren in Christ, and beloved brethren of the laity, and citizens of Albany without distinction of creed, be assured that I rejoice with a great joy to be installed today as the sixth Bishop of Albany; to take my place at the command of the Supreme Pontiff, not only as the leader of the Catholic Church in this great diocese; resolved to conserve, promote and defend its every sacred interest; but also as a loyal citizen of this community and a true Albanian, ready to stand shoulder to shoulder with every decent and law-abiding citizen, and to labor with all the energy I possess, for its religious and social welfare.

"With the help of God and under the protection of Mary Immaculate, the glorious Help of Christians, the Queen of Peace, we shall continue our labors, that the truth of Christ may prevail, that morality and religion may be cherished, that the unchangeable principles of Christian justice, peace and charity may govern the relations of men. To these exalted ends I consecrate myself, my clergy, my devoted people; and with the help of their fervent and constant prayers, I trust that God will strengthen my arm, and His Holy Spirit inspire and guide me. Amen." Words taken from the address of Bishop Gibbons at his installation.

SINCERE PLEDGE

In taking my text from the words of our Reverend Jubilarian, and, in so doing, placing him in a position so often occupied by St. Paul or others of the inspired writers, I have no intention of anticipating the mind of Holy Mother Church in his regard. Rather, do I feel that these words should be recalled on this occasion for the reason that no pledge was ever more sincerely spoken or more scrupulously kept than this promise which inaugurated the Episcopate of His Excellency, the Bishop of Albany. For I think that you will agree with me that the measure of any man's worth in a position of public trust must be made on the score of his fidelity to the promise he made, the obligations he agreed to assume, and the good he hoped to accomplish when he assumed the burden of his leadership.

Twenty-five years ago, in words so definite, so serious, so awe-inspiring, so charted with significant warnings that no one could fail to realize the temper of the ceremony, the responsibility of the Bishop's authority was placed upon his shoulders. On that occasion the Church prayed over him:

"Let his sermon and his preaching be not in the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in the showing of the spirit and of power. Give to him, O Lord, the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, so that he may make use of, not keys of the power which Thou hast given unto edification, not unto destruction. Whatsoever ye shall bind upon earth, let it be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever he shall loose upon earth, let it likewise be loosed in heaven. Let him be the faithful and prudent servant, that Thou to set, [illegible] over Thy household so [illegible] give them food in [illegible] season; [illegible] himself a [illegible] good man. May he be unfeigned, [illegible] fervent in spirit, [illegible] cherish humility, [illegible] by kindness [illegible] with the word [illegible] the [illegible] with the [illegible] and Thy grace, so that by Thy gift he may be fitted for always obtaining Thy mercy, and by Thy grace may he be faithful.

"And, therefore, we beseech Thee, O Lord, give bountifully this grace to this Thy servant, whom Thou hast chosen to the ministry of the supreme priesthood, so that whatsoever things those vestments signify by the refulgence of gold, the splendor of jewels, and the variety of diversified works, these may shine forth in his character and his actions."

In the light of this solemn consecration we can readily see that the authority with which the Bishop was invested would be but ill understood by those who would compare his functions with those of secular rulers. Appointed as they are to provide for the growing wants of society, that is ever changing, a wide latitude is allowed to secular legislators in the enactment of their laws, as well as in the discussion of those principles of public weal on which they may be founded.

Not so with the Bishop; he has laid before him a model from which he is not permitted to depart, and, like Moses in the promulgation of the commandments, his entire solicitude must be turned to the exact copying of the pattern which has been shown him on the mountain. In vain, then, would the world expect that the Church should keep pace with its shifting progress, or that its laws should bear the impress of those improvements which society continually undergoes. On the contrary, let society still go on progressing with a celerity unexampled in the past; let further secrets of nature, hitherto hidden, be successfully explored and brought out to public admiration; let the mysterious bond that links all the distant bodies of the universe be so unveiled as to be made, if possible, palpable to our senses; let the rapidity of communication, nay, of written and material correspondence, further outstrip in speed, as it has already literally outstripped the course of the sun in the firmament, or the voice of the thunder in the clouds of heaven; the Church instead of toiling after such prodigious labours or fearing to be distanced in the noisy race, silently pursues its majestic mission of guarding the treasure of divine truth which heaven has entrusted to its keeping and views the most brilliant discoveries in nature as but so many faint reflections of the Eternal Word, the uncreated Wisdom, the figure of His Father's substance, and the splendor of His glory.

BENEFICIAL IN NATURE

All these amazing developments of the laws of nature are calculated to benefit man, and excite his admiration for the power, and his gratitude for the beneficence of the Almighty, the Church contemplates with the utmost satisfaction. Yet, though instead of checking, she would rather guide and regulate our intellect in such adventurous discoveries, it is not to be imagined that she could be ever eclipsed by their brilliancy, or drawn by their attraction from her own steady course. No; the course of the Church is altogether distinct from that which reason is pursuing in such material discoveries; not less distinct are the laws by which their respective functions are guided.

The Church was founded by Our Divine Redeemer to conduct man to heaven at a time when human reason, exhausted by fruitless efforts to teach him his origin, his duties, or his end, was obliged to acknowledge its utter incapacity for the performance of so arduous a work. Our religion, then, being a code of laws, and precepts, and counsels, not discovered by reason, but revealed by our Redeemer, its perfection is to be transmitted pure as it was received. "All power," He says, "is given to Me in heaven and in earth. Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."

As the perfection of our religious conduct in being transmitted pure, as it has been revealed, the duty of thus transmitting it must be performed by those to whom it has been entrusted. It is, then, from those churches over which the Bishops presided, and into which, as so many wells, they poured their apostolical doctrine, we must draw it in order to distinguish it from the errors with which heretics sought to mingle and infect it. Such is the maxim of St. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, who thus writes: "Wherefore, we should hear those ancients in the Church who derive their succession from the Apostles, and who, according to the will of the Father, inherit the gift of truth with the succession of episcopacy." In order, then, that we should not cross the ancient boundaries of the true faith, or stray into the regions of error, we have only to consult those who, by virtue of their episcopal succession, derived their doctrines from the churches which the Apostles had founded and taught.

The peace which our Divine Redeemer left to His Apostles as His parting legacy has descended with the doctrine which He commanded them to preach, and has continued in the Church as the uniform handmaid of that power which He promises to exercise for its protection. Within, where the apostolic authority is felt and acknowledged, you are sure to find harmony in the profession of the same one faith, as well as that settled peace of which according dispositions must ever be productive.

It is this reverence for ancient usage, this zeal for the traditional doctrines once delivered to the saints, this solicitude for walking in the same paths in which our holy predecessors have trodden; yes, this sensitive apprehension of disturbing with rash and irreverent hands, these striking landmarks of doctrine and discipline, and of jurisdiction that stand out before us in our retrospect of the past; it is, in short, all this, forming a feeling analogous to a sense of an awful trust, that swayed so powerfully the greatest of our predecessors, and enabled them to hand down to us the precious deposit which it has been the duty of the Bishop to transmit with a like fidelity to after generations.

RULES OF HUMANITY

To the faithful fulfillment of this traditional stewardship our Jubilarian has committed himself during these twenty-five years. While the effects of this stewardship are visible in the souls of men and, hence, discernible only to the all-seeing eye of God, their reality is known to every pastor of souls in this diocese; these men whose hands are ever on the pulse of the humanity of the churches and who read day by day the rich pulsations, stimulated by the foresight, the zeal, the devotion, the pastoral concern, and that tireless consecration to the welfare of souls which have been the story of the last quarter of a century.

The historian has recorded in the press the impressive story of the physical adornment of the diocese, and I feel it neither exaggeration nor reflection on the great Bishops of your past to say that, besides rivalling his predecessors in all the works of his ministry, he began early to run the course of a giant encouraging the erection of churches, colleges, schools and institutions of all kinds for the corporal works of mercy throughout the diocese, so that to him we may today apply the observation made upon a certain Roman Emperor, that "he found Rome built of brick and left it built of marble."

However, you must recall that in the pledge of the Bishop with which I opened my tribute that in addition to his pastoral responsibility to his God and his flock, he said also that: "as a loyal citizen of this community and a true Albanian, I am ready to stand shoulder to shoulder with every decent and law-abiding citizen and to labor with all the energy I possess for its religious and social welfare."

FAITHFULLY KEPT

No need for me to tell the people of the Empire State or its Capital how faithfully this pledge has been kept. No project for the welfare of the community has been too insignificant to demand his attention; no effort for the betterment of civic life has solicited his support and found him unconcerned; no organized effort for the welfare of his country sought his support but found him already deeply immersed in the detail of the project and ready to help with his advice, his resources and the cooperation of his congregations.

Not the least significant feature of his public life has been his untiring and unselfish assistance to the Bishops of this province, and I am sure that the Metropolitan and my fellow Bishops would consider me lax in my responsibility did I not express our eternal gratitude and the gratitude of our people for Bishop Gibbons' unfailing courtesy and generous assistance in every matter that through these years we have often, maybe unreasonably, placed upon his desk.

Who better could express his place in the hearts of the public than the poet:

"His ready smile a parent's warmth expressed
Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distrest.
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given
But all this serious thoughts had rest in heaven.
As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form
Swells from the vale and midway leaves the storm
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread
Eternal sunshine settles on its head."

My dear friends, it may seem a bit unfair on this glorious day of jubilee to ask your good Bishop to sit and listen to tributes when you who know him so well, know also he would be the first to disclaim. Cato the Elder is credited with saying:

"I would rather have men ask, after I am dead
Why I have no monument, than why I have one."

It was because too many would say "Why was there no word of tribute to our Bishop" that we have outraged His Excellency's characteristic humility and disdain for pomp and circumstance. For me it has been a labor of love, the crowning of a personal admiration which goes back over the years to those days when, as a young assistant, I entertained His Excellency at the home of his classmate in old St. Cecilia's.

May we then ask Your Excellency to accept our tribute in the spirit in which it is given. You thank God at your Mass today for the blessings and opportunities of twenty-five years; we thank God for the man to whom He gave the opportunities and for the magnificent way he used them. You thank God for a loyal clergy and a devoted flock; we thank God for a diligent and devoted shepherd who has kept faith with his God, his country and his inauguration pledge of twenty-five years ago.

However, my dear friends, our tribute here today were a futile and meaningless thing were we not conscientiously certain that it is but a feeble echo of a more significant tribute before the throne of the Most High God. There will his praise be chanted by a choir of priests whose administrations were more effective because of the wisdom of his counsels and the challenge of his example; by the choirs of religious of his diocese now gone to their reward and the recollection of his fatherly advice and guidance in their efforts toward perfection; by the choirs of the faithful of his diocese whose path to heaven was made the easier because their Bishop made his own path harder; by the choirs of men and women of every station in life whose lives were richer in grace and blessing because they were touched by the benign personality of our Jubilarian.

But among those paeans of praise that are being sung before the throne of God, none will be more sincere than those that will come from the lips of a little Indian girl, the Lily of the Mohawks, whose canonization has been one of the most cherished labors of our Jubilarian. We can almost hear her sing in her delicate Indian cadences:

By the waters of the Hudson
In the shadow of the Catskills
Busy years, yes five and twenty
Edmund, Bishop bore his crosier
Telling men in words convincing
Telling them the endless story
Words of grace and benediction
Hours of toil and consecration
Yet, withal, the moments found he
For the cause of Tekawitha.
Now his cause she pleads, "Sweet Jesus
On his gray hairs benediction
On his years your grace and blessing
Peace and holy consolation"
—Tekawitha

TIN PICK-UP SET FOR SATURDAY

Rochester is to have its first tin can collection in six months on Saturday, Apr. 22. Many people have been asking when the next tin pickup would be. Some housewives complain that the tins are piling up fast and that they have no place to store them. All of these will be answered bright and early Saturday morning when the city trucks go from curb to curb in an all-out effort to put Rochester on the map of Tin Salvage.

Plans have been completed for the collection by the Tin Salvage Committee of the Rochester War Council. Mrs. B. Emmett Finucane and Mrs. John A. Rogers are co-chairmen of the group. The committee suggests that householders have their tin cans ready to put out Friday night so that they will not be missed by the trucks that get an early start. Industrial users of tin cans, such as hotels, restaurants and school cafeterias are requested to call the Salvage Committee Office, Main 4900 (Robert Link's Office), before Friday, for a Friday pickup so that the trucks will be free to canvass residential areas on Saturday.

In order to salvage the valuable tin for war purposes, all tin cans should be washed with paper labels removed. Both ends should be cut open and the can flattened by the foot. They should be packed in a barrel or other suitable container. Cans that are not properly prepared will not be picked up as they are unfit for processing in the detinning plant at Pittsburgh where Rochester's supply is sent and freight will not be paid on material that has no value, the chairmen of the Tin Can Salvage Committee agree.

Rochester went over the top in its last Waste Paper Collection and it is hoped that everyone will do his and her part to see that the city is up on the list of tin salvage.

ST. HERMENGILD

—martyr, was the son of Leovigild, King of the Visigoths. He was imprisoned by his father because he refused to accept Arianism and won his martyr's crown in prison.

Party at Civic Centre to Benefit Nazareth Hall

The Student Body, parents and faculty of Nazareth Hall are planning a Benefit Party to be held at Columbus Civic Center on Tuesday, April 25 at 8:30 P. M. The admission price is sixty cents, the proceeds to be used to reduce the building indebtedness.

Mrs. Walter Rodenhouse is General Chairman, assisted by Mrs. John Curran, Ticket Chairman and Mrs. Joseph Incavo, Publicity Chairman.

The Reception Committee includes the eighth grade mothers.

Mrs. Lawrence Cleary, Mrs. Donald Dailey, Mrs. Edward Doyle, Mrs. Gordon Duffy, Mrs. Jane Bagley, Mrs. Grover Baker, Mrs. Brainard Brown, Mrs. Harold Burke, Mrs. Helen Carr, Mrs. Norman Green, Mrs. George Guerinot, Mrs. Joseph Incavo, Mrs. Herbert Lane, Mrs. John McMahon, Mrs. Edward Mathis, Mrs. John Palmer, Mrs. Walter Rodenhouse, Mrs. Margaret Jackson, Mrs. Edward Teall, Mrs. William Whitehouse and also Miss Corinne Ryan.

Patrons and Patronesses include Dr. and Mrs. L. J. Nacey, Mrs. John L. Keenan, Mr. and Mrs. James Feely, Mr. and Mrs. William Miller, Reverend Francis Taylor, Dr. and Mrs. Leo F. Simpson, Mr. and Mrs. Jeremiah Hickey, Mr. and Mrs. J. Arthur Jennings, Mr. and Mrs. William F. Dewey, Dr. and Mrs. Walter A. Calihan, Miss Elizabeth V. Harper, Dr. and Mrs. M. J. Hoenig, Mr. and Mrs. Emmett V. Norton, Mr. and Mrs. Louis Langie, Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Langie, Mr. James P. B. Duffy and others.

More Than Emblem

But loving the Cross means more than loving the emblem of our Redemption. It means loving Christ. It means an eagerness to share in the Grace, the saintliness that God would pour on us through Christ. It means loving the Mass which is Calvary renewed. It means making of our life a living sacrifice, made spotless through the Blood of Christ, offered to God through the hands of Christ.—J. P. D. in America.