Bishop Tells How He Brought Faith to This Diocese

Just a century ago in this Diocese, pioneer missionaries brought the Faith to our forefathers.

This fact receives dramatic confirmation in a recently-revealed letter written in 1848 by the Most Rev. John Timon, first Bishop of the Buffalo Diocese. At that time, most of what is now the Rochester Diocese was included in Bishop Timon's jurisdiction.

In the letter which His Eminence, Francis Cardinal Spellman, read at a meeting of the Missionary Union of the Clergy at the Buffalo Eucharistic Congress there is mention of this area.

Text of the letter, addressed to the members of the Central Councils of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith at Lyons and Paris, France, follows

Buffalo, 1848

My dear sirs

After more than 30 years of mission activity in the West and South of the United States, I was consecrated Bishop of Buffalo, New York on October 17, 1847. On the 23rd of the same month, accompanied by Bishop Hughes and Bishops Walsh of Halifax and McCloskey of Albany, I arrived in Buffalo at 9 o'clock in the evening

My reception was for those Bishops a subject of astonishment and triumph for religion. The night was dark and it was raining. Nevertheless, nearly 12,000 persons formed a procession which was illuminated with more than 400 torches. A carriage with four white horses was put at the service of the Bishops. A great many musical instruments added their symphony to the religious chants. The cortege proceeded slowly through the principal street towards the French and German Church of St. Louis. Being very large, the church held at least 6,000 people. I addressed a discourse to them which was followed by Pontifical Benediction. It was already 11 o'clock when the faithful left the Church

On November 21st I consecrated the Church of St. Louis. An immense congregation had assembled. The ceremony began late in the morning and was about finished at 2 o'clock Father Petit, a Jesuit, preached in French. Father O'Reilly spoke in English. At vespers Father Guel, the Rector, preached in German. After vespers I spoke concerning the Sacrament of Confirmation and confirmed 237 persons.

On the 27th I arrived in Rochester, a city of 35,000 souls which in 1810 did not have even one inhabitant and in 1814 counted but 331. On the next day at the Church of St. Patrick, I gave Communion to 200 people and pontificated in the evening at the Church of St. Mary. A retreat was started for that parish. I preached three times each day and gave more than two meditations for the people.

From late in the morning until 10 in the evening I was in the confessional with the exception of those times when I was called upon for other priestly functions. Nearly 900 people approached the holy table, notwithstanding the fact that that parish is the smallest of the four in that city.

After the retreat I returned to Buffalo on the 7th of December. The next day I pontificated in the German Church of St Mary I preached in German and confirmed 173 people On the 10th I left for Java and arrived towards 6 o'clock in the evening at Attica, and at 7 o'clock I preached in the public school

ON THE TWELFTH a retreat was begun for the congregation of the Church of Java. About 700 people received Holy Communion, and 93 persons were confirmed. On the 16th, the day of the greatest cold of this year, I left late in the morning in an open wagon for Sheldon. There I found a large congregation of French and Germans who had been prepared by two priests in advance for a short retreat

The Church, although large, was made of wood and had not yet been finished. A part of the ceiling was covered by the snow which had fallen the night before Almost stiff with the cold, I began Mass. There were 40 people for Communion My hands, almost frozen, could not hold the ciborium. My assistants came to my aid After Mass I preached in French and German and confirmed 60 people.

I left that same evening for Buffalo where on the 19th a retreat was begun in the Church of St. Patrick. I preached as usual three times a day and from late in the morning until 10 at night I was in the confessional. There were 1500 Communions and 340 Confirmations. At the end I established a Society of St. Vincent de Paul and a society for the women under the auspices of Our Blessed Mother for the performance of works of charity and piety.

BISHOP TIMON

ON JANUARY 8TH I was at Lockport, a city of 9,000 souls The retreat began the next day and its fruits correspended to our effort, as 1,300 people received Holy Communion and 317 were confirmed Here, as last year many people who had ceased to practice the Faith had the happiness of finding peace, and many Protestants entered the Church of God

Here, too, were established the Society of St Vincent de Paul for the men and the Society of the Living Rosary for the women.

On the 18th of January, I was at Lancaster and after a day of preaching I left for Auburn. There I visited the large state prison. The warden, having been informed two days before, had, even though he was a Protestant, sought out all the Catholic prisoners.

He accompanied me with a great good will to each cell and then stood a little apart in order to give me greater freedom with the prisoner. Among 400 prisoners, there were only 28 Catholics. After having consoled them, I said to each one of them, "Remember that you have come here only after having neglected the holy practices of your religion. In the future be faithful to it in order to prevent the recurrence of faults which have been your misfortune."

Their reply in general was as follows: "Father you are right. Our revolt against the laws of the Church, the neglect of confession especially, have brought us here, but we promise that our life will be from now on a truly Christian one."

The Church of Auburn, being too small to hold the congregation, I acceeded to the invitation of the citizens and preached at 4 o'clock in the afternoon in the city hall to a large audience.

On the 24th, towards midday, I arrived at Seneca Falls. The little church was already full. The people were crushed inside; they hung on the windows and some even knelt outside the door of the church. More than 200 received Holy Communion and 54 were confirmed

IMMEDIATELY AFTER the Confirmation, I left for Geneva, a charming city situated on the shores of Seneca Lake The Protestant churches were numerous and beautiful there. The Episcopalian Bishop has fixed his residence in the city. His church in Gothic style is raised on an eminence which dominates the lake. In the interior there are stained glass windows of religious designs which would make one believe that he is in a Catholic cathedral. But the altar is only a table. It is a body without a soul. In comparison with our own church, oh, how poor it is without tabernacle, without ciborium, without ostensorium, without altar There is nothing there for public worship.

On the 29th I embarked on a steamboat to go over Lake Seneca which is 44 miles long and 4 to 6 miles wide. There is nothing more picturesque than its countryside. On and on one sees numerous villages which decorate its shores and churches in each little town, but not one belongs to the true religion. In Jefferson only we have been able to buy a church of the Presbyterian. It is a small one placed on an eminence 200 feet above the lake which dominates it gracefully I dedicated it to the Mother of God under the name of St Mary of the Lake

Arriving at Ithaca, I was brought to the city hall where the congregation was already gathered to hear the word of God. I preached for two hours on the authority of the Catholic Church. The next day, after having heard confessions and set up as best as possible an altar in the city hall, I celebrated Mass. Twenty-four people were confirmed and about 70 received Communion. It was almost the same at Owego. Here we had among our congregations the judges, the lawyers and even the Protestant ministers

DURING OUR APOSTOLIC journey snow had fallen in abundance, and I tried to go to Elmira with Father Sheridan by sleigh. Everything went well for five miles, but beyond that there was too much snow. The weather was cold, the ground frozen and hard as marble.

We could not get on any further. Our efforts brought no other result except to tip the sleigh. I had the happiness of protecting my companion by receiving the whole shock. My blood began to cover the ground. I bandaged my head with my handkerchief, and we continued our way.

From Elmira I went to Scio in company with Father Evoy. We followed the Genesee River which enters into Lake Ontario after having followed for somewhat less than 80 miles an incline of 300 feet. Its rapids are thus frequent. We counted three in a distance of half a mile.

The last fell 110 feet Above the torrent its banks rise up like walls of more than 400 feet in elevation. It is difficult for the voyager to try to sound the depth of those abysses, the sound of which mounts to his ears like a hurricane. Man also has tried his strength in the midst of that grandiose nature He has cut out of the rock a tunnel 1180 feet long and on the summit of that mountain he has constructed the building of Hornby House, which is regarded as a marvel in the country. There, surrounded by the most sublime countryside, we built an altar and for the first time the King of Glory came down to Hornby House.

A multitude of Catholics assisted at the holy mysteries. We heard their confessions up to 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Those good people were still fasting. They came from great distances to receive their God. Although worn out by fatigue, we did not have the courage to disappoint their hopes. Holy Mass began then at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Confirmation was given to 42 people and Baptism to many children. In short, it was night when we could take our breakfast.

In conclusion, therefore, since the 21st of November to January 29th, I have confirmed 1,730 people, of whom at least half were more than 40 years of age. I personally gave Communion to nearly 8,000 faithful. I still have to visit the half of my Diocese. Please pray the Lord that He aid me to the end in this pastoral work.

I have the honor to be,

J. TIMON,
Bishop of Buffalo.

Pontiff Urges U. S. Catholics to Support Cause of Missions

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who, year after year, had been going forth from home and country as Europe's contribution to the cause of the Missions.

IN THESE circumstances We look to the United States where with the warm encouragement of Our Venerable Brethren, the Archbishops and Bishops, such magnificent work has been accomplished by the Diocesan Directors of the Pontifical Mission Aid Societies. The response made last year by the faithful of the United States to the work of the Propagation of the Faith, the largest recorded from American Catholics already so distinguished for their generosity, is a marked tribute to the lively interest of the Hierarchy in this cause. It is a concrete liberation to the work of those who, under their zealous Bishops, promote the interests of the Pontifical Mission Aids. The Diocesan Directors, the clergy, secular and religious, the teachers, religious and lay alike.

Above all it is a tribute to the praiseworthy spirit of charity and self-sacrifice which animates so many millions of the faithful, young and old, throughout the United States. We are happy to have this opportunity of extending to all who shared in this magnificent accomplishment, the sincere and profound thanks of Our paternal heart.

WHICH INSPIRING have been the fruits of the past year, the needs of the present hour call for still greater sacrifices and so there must be a deepening of the missionary spirit of sacrifice. Whence comes that inspiration to sacrifice? It comes from a prayerful awareness of the needs of the missions. The Catholic's response to missionary appeal must not be a mere material gift of aid but a gift coming forth from a heart which feels in unison with the heart of Him Who was sent by God, Jesus Christ the Divine Missionary. Who wills all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth (2 Tim. II, 4).

A Catholic's interest in the Missions must not be superficial; it should go as deep as the character imprinted on the soul in Baptism and Confirmation whereby we are conformed to the likeness of Christ, deputed to His service and pledged to work hard and constantly for the building up and increase of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ.

And, indeed, Mission Sunday is a most fitting occasion for arousing that spirit of sacrifice, as also of prayer, for the Missions when with hearts raised up in supplication to the Lord of the Harvest, we pledge ourselves to work for the increase on earth of the Kingdom of God.

IT IS, TOO, the day whereon every Catholic should recall the Psalmist's question "What shall I render to the Lord for all the things He hath rendered to me" (Psl. CXV. 12). Surely no greater gift can be returned to God than our generous service, our wholehearted efforts to share with others that which we prize most—the gift of faith.

The noble generosity with which the faithful of the United States, under the guiding inspiration of Our Venerable Brethren the Archbishops and Bishops, have answered Our many appeals for charitable aid, gives Us confidence that in the cause of supreme charity, the cause for which Christ Our Saviour laid down His life on the Cross, their response will be the same generous one. In the many prayers and words will follow in the Psalmist of Our Divine Master and dedicate their lives to the salvation of souls, as the missionary.

WE PLACE THE fulfillment of Our confidence and of Our hope under the loving care of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Queen of the Missions, that she at whose generous consent to Divine Inspiration, the Word, the Savior of the world, was made Flesh, may foster in many young hearts among you that generosity of spirit to answer readily to the voice of God calling for laborers into His missionary vineyard.

With these Our thoughts for Mission Sunday, We confer to convey to Our Venerable Brethren, the members of the American Hierarchy, to the Diocesan Directors, to their zealous co-operators, and to the faithful, united in prayer and sacrifice for the cause of the Missions, the assurance of Our paternal affection for and joint solicitude in We impart to all Our spiritual Apostolic Blessing.

From the Castel Gandolfo, September 8, 1947.

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MISSION SUNDAY

HE CRIES FOR YOUR CHARITY

America's Mission Hour Here — Bishop McDonnell

By BISHOP THOMAS J. McDONNELL
National Director, The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

The advent of Mission Sunday on October 19 focuses the attention of our Catholic people on the tremendous responsibility which is theirs because of worldwide conditions. Despite the fact that over two years have passed since so-called peace has come to the nations, the upheavals of war continue to upset the tranquility of good order while man-planned and godless decisions are causing us to lose hope for a permanent peace.

Christ's Vicar has designated 1947 as "America's hour in mission history," and that because he recognizes the peculiar attributes which make unique our country's history. He realizes our ability to TRANSFORM into a space rather than a distance that very obstacles and hardships which seem to loom as many of our undertakings. In addition he appreciates the wholehearted generosity which marks America's response for aid to the less favored of the world. Their eagerness promptly to appeals for food, clothing and financial assistance has proved that forgetfulness of self is an outstanding characteristic of our people, therefore the Sovereign Pontiff finds that if this be accomplished here, God in His providence, has prepared us for it.

All important issues from your domestic economic to those that involve aspects of the Universal Church, are settled significantly here in the United States. Our country is the place of her establishment as a loyal and dominant body in our midst showing us that she

Pontiff Urges U. S. Catholics to Support Mission Cause

Declaring that the war has opened new mission fields, His Holiness, Pope Pius XII appeals to American Catholics for funds and vocations in his 1947 Mission Sunday message.

The Holy Father's message was sent to the Most Rev. Thomas McDonnell, National Director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and then forwarded to the Rev. John S. Randall, Diocesan Director.

Pius XII declares that the very war which wrought such desolation in the mission fields also brought new opportunities to the Church thanks to the heroism of missionaries.

The text of the Pope's message follows:

IT HAS SEEMED good to Us, on the approach of Mission Sunday, the day on which the minds and hearts of American Catholics are centred on the vast problem of the extension of the Kingdom of Christ upon earth, to address some considerations to Our beloved children in the United States on the present needs of the Missions.

In Our daily solicitude for the fulfillment of the divine command, imposed on Us in so special a manner, to bring to all men redemption and salvation in Christ Jesus, We have been consoled by the bright promise for the future contained in many reports which have come to Us from the Missions. The war, which caused such unprecedented damage and suffering in missionary areas, has opened new fields to the Gospel. In the dark days of conflict, vast numbers of people came to admire the splendid courage of our missionaries; they experienced their beneficent charity and were comforted by their compassionate kindness.

THROUGH THE heroic sacrifices of these missionary ambassadors of Christ, the hearts of countless thousands were opened to the saving influence of the Word of God and, as the Gentiles of old came to Philip saying "We would see Jesus" (John XII, 21), so these souls are calling out for missionaries, so that they may learn the mysteries of the Faith, hear the things of great joy—in a word, that they too may see Jesus.

Judge then of the sadness of Our paternal heart if we must close Our ears to such pleadings. If We must ignore the voices that call to Us from the pagan world. And in sorrowing heart We must confess that the means at Our disposal are regrettably inadequate.

The sad circumstance of these times have lessened the number of missionaries. The war has cut down Germany's contribution to the Church in Europe. A very considerable number of priests, seminarians, brothers, sisters, novices many Church, diocesan organizations, upset and vast numbers of the faithful forced to migrate from their homes; with the consequence that the Church has not only been deprived of an important part of its material support, but also of that ever increasing number of personnel needed

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Bishop's Mission Appeal

Feast of the Most Holy Rosary
1947

My dear People:

On next Sunday we shall take up the annual collection for the Propagation of the Faith. Our Holy Father has expressed his confidence in the generosity of our people in these words: "The American people have a genius for splendid and unselfish action, and, in the hands of America, God has placed the destinies of afflicted humanity."

This is a serious responsibility, and it applies especially to the work of the Missions. Our young men and women are flocking to the service of God in the foreign and home missions in numbers unheard of before our time. Families in this country from the Atlantic to the Pacific are giving their boys and girls to the service of God in the missions, because they realize that personal service in the spread of the Gospel of Christ has been, since the day when He sent out the first twelve, the foundation of the Christian Church.

However, it is a futile gesture to encourage the sacrifice of our missionaries home and abroad, unless we are prepared to place at their disposal those funds which are necessary for their labors and their very existence, and without which their presence in mission areas would be a waste of time and a waste of sacrifice.

We must follow these generous and courageous missionaries of ours with the means to do the work to which they have dedicated their lives. Your generosity to the Mission Collection on next Sunday will be the measure of just how much we, here in the Diocese of Rochester, can do to rebuild and advance the Kingdom of God in the missions.

Keeping in mind, then, America's great responsibility and privilege in this crucial hour, I beg of you a generous offering of at the very least one dollar in next Sunday's collection for the Propagation of the Faith.

Your devoted Shepherd in Christ,

+JAMES E. KEARNEY,
Bishop of Rochester

Mission Sunday Stresses Critical Needs of Church

News from the National Office of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith picks up the theme of the approaching Mission Sunday as one of the most critical and important so far as its effect upon the mission program of the Church is concerned.

Due to the acknowledged fact that the countries of Europe are in no condition to aid the missions of the Church financially, the responsibility for the support of the mission program rests even more definitely than ever upon American Catholics and not only for expansion but for mere existence as well.

To meet these needs October 19th has been set aside as Mission Sunday. American Catholics are urged on this day to contribute their prayers and their alms with a generosity that will prevent the spread of mission hardships in the Rome of a poor

Propagation of the Faith and the special Mission Sunday Collection will be taken in all the churches of the diocese.

The Rev. John S. Randall, Diocesan Director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, has issued the following statement:

"We take this opportunity publicly to express our heartfelt appreciation, gratitude and love in behalf of the missionaries whom they are making. We pray that God may reward them in return for their charity. We ask them, moreover, not to rest with the record of the past but to redouble their zeal to assure even additional charities to the Mission Sunday Collection. Remember, in the days to come the needs of the missions will increase and not decrease."