

Centenary of Immaculate Conception Church Recalls Long Spiritual Growth

By ARTHUR P. FARREN

To thousands of Rochesterians the spread tower of Immaculate Conception Church has been a well-known landmark. To four generations of parishioners it has been a symbol of spiritual and material progress under the protection of their patroness — the blue-mantled Lady of the Immaculate Conception.

One hundred years of labor for God, country and community will be fittingly marked by the Plymouth Avenue South parish, one of the oldest religious institutions in the diocese, in weeklong ceremonies beginning Sunday.

Ten decades ago — while Rochester still was part of Buffalo diocese — Immaculate's parishioners erected their first church building at a cost of \$4,500.

Today the parish institution — church, school, rectory and convent — could not be replaced for less than one million dollars.

Noteworthy among many accomplishments of the parish, of which the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Joseph S. Cameron, M.H., has been pastor for the last 27 years, is its contribution of 161 men and women to religious life.

During its century the Church had 11 pastors and 41 assistants. Fifty-two parishioners entered the priesthood, 97 the Sisterhoods, and two became Brothers.

HIGHLIGHTS OF today's parish summary include:

A debt-free, redecorated church building, where the pastor and three assistants offer six Masses each Sunday.

A large, modern school erected at a cost of \$312,000 and dedicated in 1946, now attended by 600 pupils. Originally begun in 1911 in a \$15,000 building, the school since then has graduated more than 4,000 pupils.

An auditorium in the school building which has become a parish civic center, with scarcely a night in the week without use. It can seat nearly 1,400 persons and has a completely equipped stage.

A large rectory adjoining the church, erected in 1871, and a convent for the Sisters of St. Joseph built on nearby Greig Street in 1946 at a cost of \$35,000.

Nine years' parish sponsorship of supervised weekly dances which have attracted a total of 260,000 teenage participants and have materially aided the parish finances.

PARISH ACTIVITIES include a weekly novena to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal. Among successfully functioning groups are the Holy Name Society, Rosary Society, Knights of St. John Ladies Auxiliary, Family Guidance Group, Sodality and Scouts.

No account of Immaculate history can fail to highlight the long service and ability of the last two pastors — the Rev. Augustine M. O'Neill, who served for 23 years from 1886, and Monsignor Cameron, who succeeded Father O'Neill in 1922.

It is interesting to note that perhaps no other diocesan parish has been blessed with more religious vocations than Immaculate. In 1939 three young men offered their first Masses there, and in 1940 four young priests said their first Masses at the same time. At four different altars — a temporary additional altar having been erected in the sanctuary for the occasion.

MANY OF THE families who had settled in the southwestern section of the City of Rochester a century ago had come from Ireland. From Ireland also came Immaculate's first pastor.

Faced with a scarcity of priests, many of whom had to travel long distances to serve the people, Bishop Timon of the Buffalo diocese appealed to Bishop Cambell of Killarney for assistance. Among seminary students who volunteered to come to America was young John Fitzpatrick, who was ordained by Bishop Timon Oct. 15, 1844.

Appointed in 1849 as pastor of the new Immaculate parish, Father Fitzpatrick at once sought a suitable location and erected a small brick church facing Edinburgh Street. His pastorate extended to 1852, when he was transferred to another parish in Onondaga. Subsequently he served Catholics of Lockport, Clyde and Lyons. He died in 1868.

SECURITY OF priests resulted in frequent changes of pastor during the next eight years. Records show the following:

Rev. Patrick Bradley, 1852; Rev. Thomas O'Brien, 1852-58; Rev. Francis McKoon, 1858-59; Rev. W. C. Stevens, 1859-60.

It was the Rev. Peter Bede, an Irish-born priest who was pastor from 1860 to 1868, who erected the present church edifice on Plymouth Avenue.

Father Bede, former vicar general of Buffalo diocese and pastor of St. Joseph's Cathedral here, was appointed to Immaculate after brief pastorates in Lockport and St. Patrick's Church, Rochester.

Four years afterward fire destroyed the original church on Edinburgh Street. Wasting no time, Father Bede erected in the same year the present church at a cost of \$35,000. Two years later he was transferred to the pastorate of St. Peter & Paul Church, Elmira, where he died in 1870.

HIS SUCCESSOR, the Rev. Patricio Byrnes, a native of Montevideo, South America, had served several parishes in Rochester, Corning, Jamestown, Salamanca and Lockport before being named to Immaculate in 1868. Two years later the new Rochester diocese was formed and Immaculate became one of the largest and most important of its parishes.

Father Byrnes was one of the first to support Bishop McQuaid, first Ordinary, in promotion of Catholic education. He erected, in 1871, the first parish school, a brick building facing Plymouth Ave. In the same year he constructed the rectory which still houses the parish priests.

Fire damaged the church in 1873. It was typical of the Immaculate parishioners that not only did they rally in the face of this calamity but they incurred additional debt to enlarge and fresco the edifice. Father Byrnes' nine-year pastorate ended in 1875 when he became ill on Passion Sunday and died on Good Friday.

NEXT CAME the 11-year service of the Rev. Michael M. Meagher. Born in Tipperary in 1831, Father Meagher entered the Passionist Order in America, becoming in 1870 the superior of the monastery at Dunkirk, N. Y. Three years later, advised by his physician that the monastic rigors were too great for his failing health, he obtained permission to enter Rochester diocese as a secular priest.

After some years as assistant at St. Patrick's Cathedral and as pastor of Scottdale and Mt. Morris, Father Meagher was named to Immaculate. Indefatigable in his labors, he reduced the parish debt from \$41,000 to \$18,000. He died in 1888.

Following a few months' interim administration by the Rev. W. A. McDonald, Bishop McQuaid appointed the Rev. James F. O'Hare as Immaculate pastor.

Born in Cathedral parish in 1846, he studied at Niagara University and St. Joseph's Seminary in Troy, being ordained by Bishop McQuaid in 1869. Appointed assistant pastor of the Cathedral, he became pastor in 1875 and served until his appointment to Immaculate. In 1890 he was appointed vicar general of the diocese.



AIR VIEW OF IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH PROPERTY

Present Assistants at Immaculate Conception Church



REV. GEORGE S. WOOD



REV. EDWARD A. ZIMMER



REV. GERALD E. DUNN

IT WAS during Father O'Hare's 12-year pastorate that Immaculate's school facilities were broadened, first with a \$9,300 addition to the old school then with construction of a \$33,000 new school on Edinburgh Street.

In 1898 about 800 parishioners of Immaculate became the nucleus of St. Monica's Church. A few months later Father O'Hare was stricken with appendicitis, and died August 5, 1898.

FOR THE NEXT 23 years the parish reached heights of progress under the capable hand of the Rev. Augustine M. O'Neill. Born in Auburn in 1859, he studied at Niagara University and the Troy Seminary before his ordination in 1884 by Bishop McQuaid.

Father O'Neill's duties as assistant at St. Andrew's Seminary and secretary to Bishop McQuaid brought a breath of life which resulted in his transfer to parishes in Colorado and Wyoming. On his return he was given temporary charges at Victor, Seneca Falls and Scottsville before being named pastor at Phelps in 1891.

On appointment to Immaculate, Father O'Neill immediately began preparation for the parish Golden Jubilee in 1899, which was marked by Bishop McQuaid at a Pontifical High Mass. In 1905 Father O'Neill was made an irremovable rector.

During Father O'Neill's pastorate the church was redecorated, with new windows installed; the outside vestibule was added, the

rectory was enlarged, the convent erected, and additional property on Edinburgh and Glasgow Streets was obtained for \$12,000. When the parish debt was eliminated in 1912 Father O'Neill set up a fund for construction of a new school which rose to \$80,000 at the time of his death.

Under Father O'Neill Immaculate grew in importance, with 4,000 persons attending Sunday Masses, 900 school pupils, a parish magazine, a Catechetical Band, and Holy Name and Rosary societies which were among the largest in the nation.

Evidence of his esteem in the community was contained in Father O'Neill's varied organizational connections. Among others he was president of the State conference of Charities and president of the Rochester Chapter of the Catholic Summer School of America at Cliff Haven. He served on the Diocesan School Board and the Board of Governors; he was a trustee of St. Bernard's Seminary and a member of the executive boards of the City Library and the Children's Aid Society. He also was a member of the Mayor's Arbitration Board to adjudicate differences between contractors and labor.

FATHER O'NEILL died after a few weeks' illness on Dec. 21, 1921, leaving behind a memory of priestly zeal, solicitude, efficiency and learning — loved by a devoted congregation esteemed and respected by all Rochester as one of its foremost citizens.

Progress in material development of the parish properties continued under Monsignor Cameron. In 1923 the church was redecorated, the electricity was repaired and the flooring was laid, at a cost of \$15,000. A year later the rectory and convent were repaired at an expenditure of \$6,000, additional property on Glasgow and Edinburgh Streets was purchased for \$46,000, and buildings thereon were razed at a cost of \$11,000.

Ground was broken for the present Immaculate School on May 11, 1925, and Rochester's second Ordinary, Bishop Hickey, laid the cornerstone on Oct. 11. The building was dedicated in September 1928.

The school contains 21 classrooms, principal's office, nurse's room, rest room for teachers, a completely equipped kitchen and dining room, five large meeting rooms, a music room, a band room and a library with provision for 5,000 books. The parish thus entered

1927 with an indebtedness of \$260,000. This was lowered through the following years, and in 1948, after repair of the church and convent, Monsignor Cameron made the announcement that the parish was out of debt.

Present members of Immaculate are: Michael H. Stern and Frank J. Connor, Alice John J. Lee and Emmet W. Moore are assistants.

Parish Had 41 Assistants

During its 100 years as a parish, Immaculate Conception Church has had 41 assistant pastors. They were:

The Reverend Fathers: Thomas Brody, 1872; M. P. O'Connell, 1873; James R. McKee, 1874; Angelo Eugene, 1877; J. J. Lory, 1878; R. L. Lory, 1879; Joseph J. Shon, 1880; J. E. O'Connell, 1881; J. P. H. Hayes, 1882; J. P. H. Hayes, 1883; J. P. H. Hayes, 1884; J. P. H. Hayes, 1885; J. P. H. Hayes, 1886; J. P. H. Hayes, 1887; J. P. H. Hayes, 1888; J. P. H. Hayes, 1889; J. P. H. Hayes, 1890; J. P. H. Hayes, 1891; J. P. H. Hayes, 1892; J. P. H. Hayes, 1893; J. P. H. Hayes, 1894; J. P. H. Hayes, 1895; J. P. H. Hayes, 1896; J. P. H. Hayes, 1897; J. P. H. Hayes, 1898; J. P. H. Hayes, 1899; J. P. H. Hayes, 1900; J. P. H. Hayes, 1901; J. P. H. Hayes, 1902; J. P. H. Hayes, 1903; J. P. H. Hayes, 1904; J. P. H. Hayes, 1905; J. P. H. Hayes, 1906; J. P. H. Hayes, 1907; J. P. H. Hayes, 1908; J. P. H. Hayes, 1909; J. P. H. Hayes, 1910; J. P. H. Hayes, 1911; J. P. H. Hayes, 1912; J. P. H. Hayes, 1913; J. P. H. Hayes, 1914; J. P. H. Hayes, 1915; J. P. H. Hayes, 1916; J. P. H. Hayes, 1917; J. P. H. Hayes, 1918; J. P. H. Hayes, 1919; J. P. H. Hayes, 1920; J. P. H. Hayes, 1921; J. P. H. Hayes, 1922; J. P. H. Hayes, 1923; J. P. H. Hayes, 1924; J. P. H. Hayes, 1925; J. P. H. Hayes, 1926; J. P. H. Hayes, 1927; J. P. H. Hayes, 1928; J. P. H. Hayes, 1929; J. P. H. Hayes, 1930; J. P. H. Hayes, 1931; J. P. H. Hayes, 1932; J. P. H. Hayes, 1933; J. P. H. Hayes, 1934; J. P. H. Hayes, 1935; J. P. H. Hayes, 1936; J. P. H. Hayes, 1937; J. P. H. Hayes, 1938; J. P. H. Hayes, 1939; J. P. H. Hayes, 1940; J. P. H. Hayes, 1941; J. P. H. Hayes, 1942; J. P. H. Hayes, 1943; J. P. H. Hayes, 1944; J. P. H. Hayes, 1945; J. P. H. Hayes, 1946; J. P. H. Hayes, 1947; J. P. H. Hayes, 1948; J. P. H. Hayes, 1949.

The Reverend Fathers: Joseph Buslin, 1897; Philip Finley, 1901; George W. Fink, 1902; Andrew B. Neill, 1903; John J. Ganey, 1908; Daniel S. Schuman, 1910; Edward Lynch, 1911; Victor J. Hines, 1913; J. Ernest Brophy, 1914; Howard F. Barry, 1916; Charles J. Burton, 1917; Leo G. Schaub, 1918; Leo V. Smith, 1918; Francis J. Lane, 1920; Dennis V. Lane, 1922; Frederic J. Wise, 1926; Leo A. Smith, 1932; Donald J. Murphy, 1937; Charles V. Boyce, 1940; George S. Wood, 1940; John F. Roach, 1941; John B. Maney, 1941; John F. McAfferty, 1946; Donald J. Murray, 1946; Gerald F. Dunn, 1948; Edward A. Zimmer, 1949.

Present assistants are Fathers: Wood Zimmer and Dunn.

Weeklong Monsignor Cameron Now Rites Set In 28th Year As Pastor

Devotion to the Immaculate Conception has been a great part of the life of the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Joseph S. Cameron, Ph.D., who for two-thirds of his priestly career has been pastor of Immaculate Conception Church, where next week will begin the centenary of the church's establishment in 1849.

Now in his 28th year as pastor of the Plymouth Avenue South Church in Rochester, Monsignor Cameron also served for 14 1/2 years as assistant pastor of the Immaculate Conception Church in Plattsburgh.

RECORDS SHOW a total of 4,503 marriages, 11,949 baptisms and 8,625 burials.

CENTENIAL CEREMONIES include:

- Sun. Mon. Tues., Dec. 4-5-6: Triduum, 7:45 p. m.
- Wed. Dec. 7: Youth social party, auditorium, 9 to 12 p. m.
- Thurs. Dec. 8: Solemn High Mass in Thanksgiving, 9 a. m.; Centennial Banquet, auditorium, 7 p. m. His Excellency Bishop Kearney speaker.
- Fri., Dec. 9: Solemn High Mass for all living parishioners, 9:15 a. m. Cantata, auditorium, 8 p. m.
- Sat. Dec. 10: Solemn High Mass for all deceased parishioners, 9:15 a. m.
- Sun. Dec. 11: Solemn Pontifical High Mass by Bishop Kearney, 11 a. m.

HE WAS BORN in Hornell, N. Y., on Nov. 4, 1881, the son of Joseph Cameron and Mary Curran. After graduating from St. Ann's in that city he entered St. Andrew's seminary and completed his theological studies at St. Bernard's Seminary. He was ordained June 8, 1907, in St. Patrick's Cathedral, by Bishop McQuaid.

Of some coincidence is the fact that the late Rev. James F. O'Hare, ninth pastor of Immaculate Conception Church, Rochester, was the first priest to be ordained for this diocese by Bishop McQuaid, while Father Cameron, eleventh pastor of the centennial parish, was the last.

Father Cameron's first appointment was as assistant pastor of St. Mary's Church, Rochester, where he served for seven years under Fathers O'Hare and Fitzsimons.

TRANSFERRED to Plattsburgh, Father Cameron was there two years before being named pastor of St. Mary's Church, Bath. It was during this period that he was named to the then part-time position as Diocesan Superintendent of Schools. He held the latter office until June 1929 when the now Rt. Rev. Msgr. John M. Duffy was appointed.

On Feb. 7, 1922, a few weeks after the death of the Rev. Augustine M. O'Neill, pastor of Rochester's Immaculate Conception parish, Father Cameron was chosen to succeed him. One year later Father Cameron was named a Diocesan Trustee and Consultant to fill the



MONSIGNOR CAMERON

was called by the death of Monsignor D. J. Carran, V. G.

ANOTHER HONOR came to Father Cameron in 1930 when he was elevated to be a Domestic Prelate of His Holiness, Pope Pius XI with the title of Right Reverend Monsignor.

Monsignor Cameron's younger brother, the Rev. Ignatius X. Cameron, is pastor of St. Ignace in Plattsburgh, Hornell.

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Rev. Harry M. O'Connor
Rev. Andrew H. Rogosh
Rev. Joseph P. Connelly

On Mary's Day
On December 8th the day on which we salute Our Lady for the unique privilege that sets her apart from every other human being — her Immaculate Conception, we remind you of the lovely National Shrine that we hope to build in Our Lady's honor — in the world's most fertile missionary territory — in Trivandrum, India... Won't you greet Our Lady with a gift on Mary's Day — one dollar, ten a hundred? Inscribe your name on Mary's grateful heart. She will not forget!

TAX FREE AND ETERNAL
Monsignor McMahon took a four day trip into Deseret with Bishop Hebbes. "The streets are knee high in dust now in the winter here deep in mud. It took me days to get the dust out of my carcase." This good Bishop needs a Chapel School. It will be tax free, you can claim exemption and will give glory to God Eternal! (Can you find that thousand dollars that you have planned so long — on giving to God? ... He needs it now.)

HELP FOR ANCIENT PIRAEUS
In this port city of Athens the ancient Fathers need help desperately. Their church and convent were damaged by bombs during the recent war. With native help they can repair a damage for \$50 dollars. Will you restore God's House and share in every Mass and devotion of these priests and the people? Your name and needs will be wrapped in prayer every day — if you become their benefactor.

A DIFFERENT GIFT
Would you like to tell someone you love that your devotion and remembrance — will last into the life beyond? For Christmas — give him — or her — our lovely Gift Card enclosing Thirty Gregorian Masses in suspension — the gift that says: "I will love you always — both in time and in Eternity." Send in the offering for 30 Masses and we will send the Gift Card, Suspense Card and Gregorian Mass leaflet to you — or to your loved one — in time for Christmas.

A BLESSED CHRISTMAS GIFT
There will be no joy at Christmas for our thousand refugees at St. Joseph's Camp outside Beirut — unless you share with them God's bounty. For five dollars Monsignor McMahon can give a Refugee — a fine blanket, and a goodly supply of sugar, rice and soap. It may not be your idea of a Christmas gift — but every refugee who shares your bounty will thank God and you — for a happy and blessed Christmas.

ADOPT AN ORPHAN FOR CHRISTMAS
The children cared for by the Sisters of Charity in St. Charles' Orphanage in Beirut have mistaken Monsignor McMahon for Santa Claus. He will be Santa — in Your Place — if you will send an offering to bring stockings and sweets to these homeless orphan girls on Christmas day. Any offering one dollar — three — five or ten will enable you to Adopt An Orphan for Christmas.

STILL A BEST BUY
Five dollars will do wonders for it will —
1. Make you a depositor in MARY'S BANK for Nuns — and
2. Buy twenty loaves of ORPHAN'S BREAD — and
3. Purchase altar linens for our MONICA GUILD — and
4. Provide school supplies for our BASILIAN CLUB — and
5. Help the CHRYSOSTOMS — aid students for the priesthood. It is our Bargain Charity Package. Have one for Christmas.

YOUR MASS INTENTIONS
Our priests depend entirely on Mass Intentions — for the barest essentials of life. When sent to our office — your Mass Intentions serve a double purpose. ... The Masses are said for your intentions — and starving priests are fed.

THE LEPERS' CHRISTMAS
Will be white — but not with newly fallen snow — The white scales of leprosy are a familiar sight to these poor souls — "The outcasts of men, the beloved of God." Do send an offering — that we may bring some gladness to our lepers on Christmas morn. You can spare a dollar!

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