



The Cathedral of the Rochester Diocese

The Sacred Heart Cathedral

Former parish church, pro-cathedral, and now cathedral

will be scene of consecration for first time

By THOMAS H. O'CONNOR

A PARISH church, the pro-Cathedral, and now the Sacred Heart Cathedral of the Diocese of Rochester. This is the church edifice on Flower City Park corner of Primrose St. in which the first Auxiliary Bishop of Rochester, the Most Rev. Lawrence B. Casey, will be consecrated also as Titular Bishop of Cea on May 5.

The imposing Indiana limestone structure whose twin Gothic towers rise majestically upon the Rochester northwest skyline in the Kodak Park area, beautified on the interior in the last year is being readied for the ceremonies of ecclesiastical splendor. For the first time it will be equipped to televise the ceremonies via WHAM-TV.

Built in 1926 and 1927 under the direction of the Rt. Rev. Magr. George V. Burns, rector-emeritus and pastor-founder of Sacred Heart Parish, the church was given additional beautifying touches under the direction of the present rector, Bishop-elect Casey.

The church's architectural grandeur impressed His Excellency Bishop Kearney from the time of his impressive installation on Nov. 11, 1937. Many of his ideas have been incorporated into the improvements and decorations completed within the past year.

The church building is of English Gothic of the Third Period design. It is situated 165 feet back from

Flower City Park. The nave is 60 feet, four inches wide and the transepts are 97 feet. It seats 900 persons.

Pillars of the pier type support the high ceiling. Evanston variegated slate flagging was used for floors when the church was built.

WHEN Bishop-elect Casey, Cathedral rector, was appointed by His Excellency Bishop Kearney as pastor of Sacred Heart Pro-Cathedral parish on March 21, 1932, he announced that improvements in the entire parish plant would be made and chief of these would be in the church interior.

Beautification of the church, as "a lasting tribute" to Monsignor Burns, founder of the parish and now rector emeritus, was the program, Monsignor Casey announced at the time.

Previously installed in the Cathedral were the striking white marble altar and the great organ from the former St. Patrick's Cathedral on Platt St.

New lighting fixtures brightened Sacred Heart church, installed as the first project in the improvement plan.

The Communion rail was doubled in width and the Sanctuary was enlarged. Front pews across the church, necessitating the loss of 50 seats, were removed. This was compensated for when the church organ underwent extensive repairs, and 80 seats

were provided in the choir loft. Remodeling of the organ permitted a better view of the beautiful stained glass windows over the choir loft.

A beautiful crimson, silk-velvet drape now frames the historic high altar. Prominent over the high altar is the coat of arms of the Diocese of Rochester with the cross of St. Andrew prominently displayed.

The throne of His Excellency Bishop Kearney on the gospel side of the sanctuary was recessed, redecorated and tipped with gold. A wainscoting in keeping with the decoration of pulpit and throne was installed on each side of the high altar.

THE four confessionals have been soundproofed and remodeled for the greater convenience of priest and penitent. The statue and altar in the Blessed Mother Chapel, on the gospel side were refinished in a light oak color and rededicated to Our Lady of Fatima. Concealed light illuminate the statue. A new silk drape serves as a background.

A new hand-carved wood statue of the Sacred Heart was placed in the St. Joseph Chapel on the epistle side of the sanctuary. Concealed light focuses on the statue and the new red silk-velvet drape behind it.

The statue of the Sacred Heart was blessed by Bishop Kearney on Nov. 3,

1933 following administration of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

A niche of carved wood designed and executed by Donald E. Woerner was installed in the east transept for the statue of St. Joseph. A narrow baldachine of carved wood, also designed by Mr. Woerner was placed over the large red dossal-drape behind the high altar.

Doors of all entrances to the church were sanded and refinished in a color which blends with the stone background.

When the then Father Burns, found his parish growing fast, back in the 1920s, he began to plan a church that would accommodate the many parishioners and would be an addition of church beauty to the Diocese of Rochester.

ALTHOUGH given a free hand in the building of the Church by Bishop Thomas F. Hickey, Monsignor Burns, nevertheless, asked Bishop Hickey to accompany him to Chicago to consult with an architect.

The architect chosen was Charles H. Prindiville of Chicago. He with an artist decorator provided the plans for the church which was, 25 years later, to be elevated by His Holiness Pope Pius XII to the dignity of a Cathedral. Tuffa and Maggio were the general contractors.

The artist-decorator installed the angels at the top of the pillars each bearing a symbolic emblem, such as "Veronica's Veil," and others. The Epistyle and a special Bishop's chapel are located on the west side of the church, near the Sanctuary, and behind an artistic wrought-iron door forming a cross when viewed by the congregation.

An admirer of the church edifice, Archbishop, now Edward Cardinal Mooney, as fourth Bishop of Rochester, requested His Holiness Pope Pius XI to proclaim Sacred Heart Church, the Pro-Cathedral of the Diocese of Rochester in September, 1937. This followed razing of the old St. Patrick's Cathedral.

Ground was broken for the Sacred Heart Church in March 1925 and the new church was blessed by Archbishop Hickey on June 8, 1927.

Last year on Sunday, Oct. 5, His Excellency Bishop Kearney spoke at all Masses in Sacred Heart Pro-Cathedral. He took occasion to read the Conatorial Decree of Erection from the Holy See designating Sacred Heart Church as the Cathedral.

The location of Bishop Kearney's Episcopal throne was made permanent in the church.

BECAUSE of its artistic merit and suitability for holding pontifical functions, Bishop Kearney in May of 1952 petitioned His Holiness asking that Sacred Heart Church be dedicated to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and elevated to a Cathedral.

As explained by Bishop Kearney, under the decree elevating the Cathedral, the Bishop became pastor and Monsignor Casey, rector. Bishop-elect Casey will continue to be rector, it was announced at the time of his appointment.

The Bishop Kearney's Episcopal throne was made permanent in the church.

The Sacred Heart Cathedral will now be the scene of a solemn pontifical function when the rector is elevated to the Episcopacy.

In front of its white marble altar, Bishop Thomas F. Hickey, Bishop Edward J. Hanna, Bishop John Francis O'Hara, all since deceased, and Bishop Walter A. Foery of Syracuse were elevated to the Episcopacy. All these ceremonies took place when the altar was in Rochester's former St. Patrick's Cathedral on Platt Street.

When the old St. Patrick's Cathedral was razed, the Rt. Rev. Magr. Charles F. Shay was rector. He is now pastor of Rochester's Holy Rosary Church.

It is now more than 40 years, since Monsignor Burns first went to start a parish in the rapidly growing Kodak Park section. He has seen the parish plant develop under his guidance and has seen it expanded under the guidance of Bishop-elect Casey.

The structure dedicated in 1927 will be a fitting scene for the impressive elevation of a modern-day Apostle of Christ's Church.