

Diocese Of Rochester Founded In 1868

Phenomenal growth of churches, schools, institutions recalls progress of 85-year-old Diocese under five Bishops

By REV. ROBERT F. McNAMARA

EIGHTEEN hundred and sixty-eight. Year of our Lord. A turbulent year in which the chaos of Reconstruction reached its peak in the futile attempt to impeach Andrew Johnson. Immigration, interrupted by the Civil War, was showing increased vigor.

Not only the nation was expanding, the Catholic Church was growing as well. To take care of these increasing flocks, the Holy See that year erected nine American new sees. One of these was Rochester, New York, which was established by a Papal Brief of March 3, 1868, to include the counties of Monroe, Wayne, Livingston, Cayuga, Tompkins, Ontario, Yates and Seneca.

It was a new diocese in name, but one already venerable in faith, since between 1668 and 1708 Christ had often descended in His Eucharistic presence upon the altars of seven Jesuit missions among the Iroquois which stood within its present boundaries. In fact the first white man to reside in the Rochester district for any length of time was the heroic missionary to the Senecas, Julien Garnier, S.J.

To head this new diocese Rome in the same month of March 1868, chose the Vicar General of the Diocese of Newark, Bernard Joseph McQuaid. Born in New York on December 15, 1823, educated in Canada and at St. Joseph's Seminary, Fordham, N. Y., he served after his ordination in 1848 in northern New Jersey. From the start he was a zealous founder of parishes and parochial schools, and because of this zeal he soon became an indispensable to the life of the Church in northern New Jersey that he became the right-hand man of the first Bishop of Newark, James Roosevelt Bailey, when that Diocese was erected in 1853.

Father McQuaid continued to live up to his reputation and was responsible for the foundation of the Sisters of Charity of Convent Station, New Jersey, and of Seton Hall College and Seminary at South Orange.

His episcopal consecration took place in the New York's Cathedral on July 12, 1868. His installation in the Rochester Diocese followed on the next Sunday, July 16, in the temporary building which served as a church while the Cathedral was being constructed. Immediately after that ceremony, he went in to St. Joseph's German Church, where he delivered another special address to the German Catholics of Rochester. The Bishop intended to be the spiritual father to all his Rochester children, irrespective of their national or racial origin.

The Bishop's first duty, as teacher of his flock, was to preserve their faith. Naturally all his episcopal activities were directed in one way or another to the fulfillment of this supreme task. But a few particulars may be singled out. He legislated for the diocese in two diocesan synods, held on October 14-15, 1875, and on June 14, 1887. He was particularly occupied with the establishment of new churches and chapels to care for the growing needs of the people.

To provide priests for all these parishes he encouraged native vocations through the establishment of St. Andrew's Minor Seminary in 1870, and the major St. Bernard's Seminary in 1893.

Nor were Bishop McQuaid's exertions for the preservation of the faith restricted to his Rochester Catholics alone. He collaborated with the rest of the American Hierarchy in ecclesiastical councils and affairs of national religious importance; he favored the missions by educating missionary vocations gratis, and by giving one of his pastors, Father Thomas



BISHOP BERNARD J. McQUAID

... on business call in old State Street.

A Headrick of St. Bridget's, to become Bishop of Cebu in the Philippines in 1903. He also played an active part in the Vatican Council.

NEXT only to his labors for the preservation of the faith was his zeal for Catholic education. Wherever Bishop McQuaid could establish parochial schools in his diocese, he did so, and he became their ever more vocal champion throughout the nation.

The majority of the diocesan parochial schools were placed in the charge of the Sisters of St. Joseph, whom the Bishop had established as a diocesan community in 1868. Other schools remained under the supervision of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, who added St. Joseph's Commercial School to their undertakings in 1904. Still others were taught by the Sisters of Mercy, who came under Rochester episcopal government when the diocese was established in 1868 and whose diocesan community was naturally much increased when, on December 10, 1896, Rome enlarged the boundaries of the diocese to include the counties of Steuben, Chemung, Schuyler and Tioga, where they had four well-established missions at Hornell, Corning, Elmira and Owego.

Of course the Sacred Heart Academy which the Ladies of the Sacred Heart had opened thirteen years before Rochester became a Diocesan

See continued to flourish. Cathedral High was founded in Bishop McQuaid's time too, in 1903.

Catholic charitable enterprise also occupied an important place in the Bishop's activities. Since he had been left an orphan himself, it is not surprising that he showed interest in the orphanages already established in Rochester when he arrived. He found St. Patrick's, the boys' Home, already operated by the Sisters of St. Joseph. He transferred the administration of the girls' Home St. Mary's to them as well. Much later on, in 1904, he established a residence for the needy of more advanced years, St. Ann's Home for the Aged.

The number of Catholic hospitals in the diocese was trebled with the annexation of Steuben County in 1896, with its six year old St. James Mercy Hospital in Hornell, and with the opening in Elmira in 1908 of St. Joseph's Hospital by the Sisters of St. Joseph.

These works were in fulfillment of the Bishop's duty to encourage practical charity. Charitable in another sense was the Ladies' Catholic Benevolent Association, in which the Bishop took much personal interest, and of which he became the second Supreme Adviser. Charitable to the souls of the faithful departed was his establishment of Holy Sepulchre Cemetery in 1871.

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**Bishop McQuaid
Founder Of
Rochester See**

TO survey the accomplishments of the first Bishop of Rochester, one must say with Pope, "A mighty maze, but not without a plan."

The Infant Diocese of Rochester was poor and humble when Bernard J. McQuaid came here as its first Bishop. His task was Herculean but the new Bishop was more than equal to the challenge.

On the rigid foundation he laid, four successive Bishops have raised the Diocese to the dignity it commands today. Next Tuesday the Diocese will be honored further when His Eminence Francis Cardinal Spellman consecrates Bishop Lawrence R. Casey as Auxiliary to Bishop James E. Kearney.

Bishop McQuaid began his formal education in a classical school at Chambly, near Montreal at the age of 14. He was ordained Jan. 16, 1848 in New York City after completing his theological studies at St. John's College in New York City.

His first assignment was to the mission at Madison, N. J. With true priestly zeal he founded churches in Morristown and Springfield. In Morristown he established a Catholic School which he served both as principal and teaching staff.

Father McQuaid in September, 1853 became rector of the Cathedral in Newark. His diocesan work did not keep him from the educational field. He founded Seton Hall College and for 10 years served as its president. He was instrumental in setting up the Sisters of Charity in New Jersey and in founding St. Elizabeth's College for young women. Throughout his life he remained a strong friend and a patron of the institution.

At imposing ceremonies in St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City, Father McQuaid was consecrated the first Bishop of Rochester on July 12, 1868.

IN his new diocese he began immediately the building of Catholic schools. He was a pioneer in the field and his ingenuity and marked success merited him the title "The Champion of Christian Education."

On his arrival there was but one Irish Catholic and five German Catholic schools in Rochester. There also was the Academy of Christian Brothers, but its necessary fees restricted attendance to those boys whose parents could afford to pay.

Bishop McQuaid organized the Sisters of St. Joseph and began the present diocesan school system with three teachers and about 600 pupils.

To support his first schools and to win the assistance and help of the laity, Bishop McQuaid entered the lecture field. His efforts were published under the title, "Christian Free Schools." With the backing of the authorities in Rome, Bishop McQuaid revived in this country the policy of the church in relation to the education of children.

His efforts in the Rochester Diocese were marked with outstanding success. Today the Rochester Diocesan School System is the model for the United States. As news of Bishop McQuaid's splendid work spread, educators from all over the nation, both Catholic and public, came to the city to study his plans.

Bishop McQuaid's education plan (Continued on Page 54)