

Archbishop Hickey

Rochester's Second Bishop championed religion study for public school pupils

WHEN a man departs this world no matter how high or how low his station in life, he wishes to leave some monument of his life's work.

Rochester's second Bishop, Thomas F. Hickey, left monuments of brick and mortar that will endure and thrive as long as the Rochester Diocese exists.

To the city that he was born in and so loved and cherished throughout his life, he bequeathed Aquinas Institute, Mercy High School, Nazareth Academy and the Motherhouse for the Sisters of St. Joseph.

Also to the young of the city he left his establishment of religious instruction for public school children. He pioneered in this field and today his program is part of the State Law.

Thomas F. Hickey was born Feb. 4th, 1861, in Rochester, New York, probably at the family homestead on Clinton Ave. between Alexander St. and Comfort St. His father was Jeremiah H. Hickey, a successful Main St. tailor, the founder of Hickey-Freeman, one of the best known clothing companies in this country. The Bishop's mother was Margaret Griffin Hickey.

The Hickey family also included two daughters and another son, Jeremiah, Jr., followed in his father's footsteps in the clothing industry. But Thomas, ambitious for the priesthood and consequently after finishing at old St. Mary's Grammar School, he entered the newly founded St. Andrew's Seminary on Frank St. He was graduated in 1879 and moved to St. Joseph's Seminary in Troy.

He was ordained by Bishop Bernard McQuaid in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Rochester, Mar. 25th, 1884. Bishop McQuaid sent the new priest as a curate to St. Francis de Sales Church, Geneva. Within four years he was the pastor of St. Patrick's Church, Moravia.

In 1895, Father Hickey was appointed chaplain of the State Industrial School then located at the present Edgerton Park, Rochester. It was here that Father Hickey gained his first experience with the education of youth. On Jan. 31, 1898, Bishop McQuaid appointed him rector of St. Patrick's Cathedral, and by 1900, Father Hickey was named Vicar General of the diocese.

Bishop McQuaid, now getting on in years, and less able to attend to all the details of his growing diocese, felt the need of an auxiliary bishop. In 1905, Pope Pius X appointed Thomas Hickey Titular Bishop of Berenice, and coadjutor to the Bishop of Rochester with the right of succession.

THE consecration ceremony was held May 24, 1905. "It is worthy of

note", a reporter for the parish bulletin recounted, "that the day was bright and mild, as beautiful a day as springtime has ever known. The whole scene was one of splendor and pomp long to be remembered." More than 2,000 people crowded the Cathedral as the Apostolic Delegate, the Most Rev. Donato Falconio, five Archbishops, 12 Bishops, and hundreds of monsignori, priests and students filed into the Church for the ceremony. Bishop-elect Hickey was escorted by the co-consecrators, Bishop McQuaid, and Bishop Patrick Ludden of Syracuse, and followed by the consecrating prelate, John M. Farley, Archbishop of New York. The Archbishop of Chicago, James E. Quigley, also attended.

The Bishop's mother, sisters, and brother were all present to witness the ceremony.

Bishop McQuaid died on Jan. 18, 1909. Bishop Hickey, as coadjutor bishop, succeeded him immediately, becoming the second Bishop of Rochester.

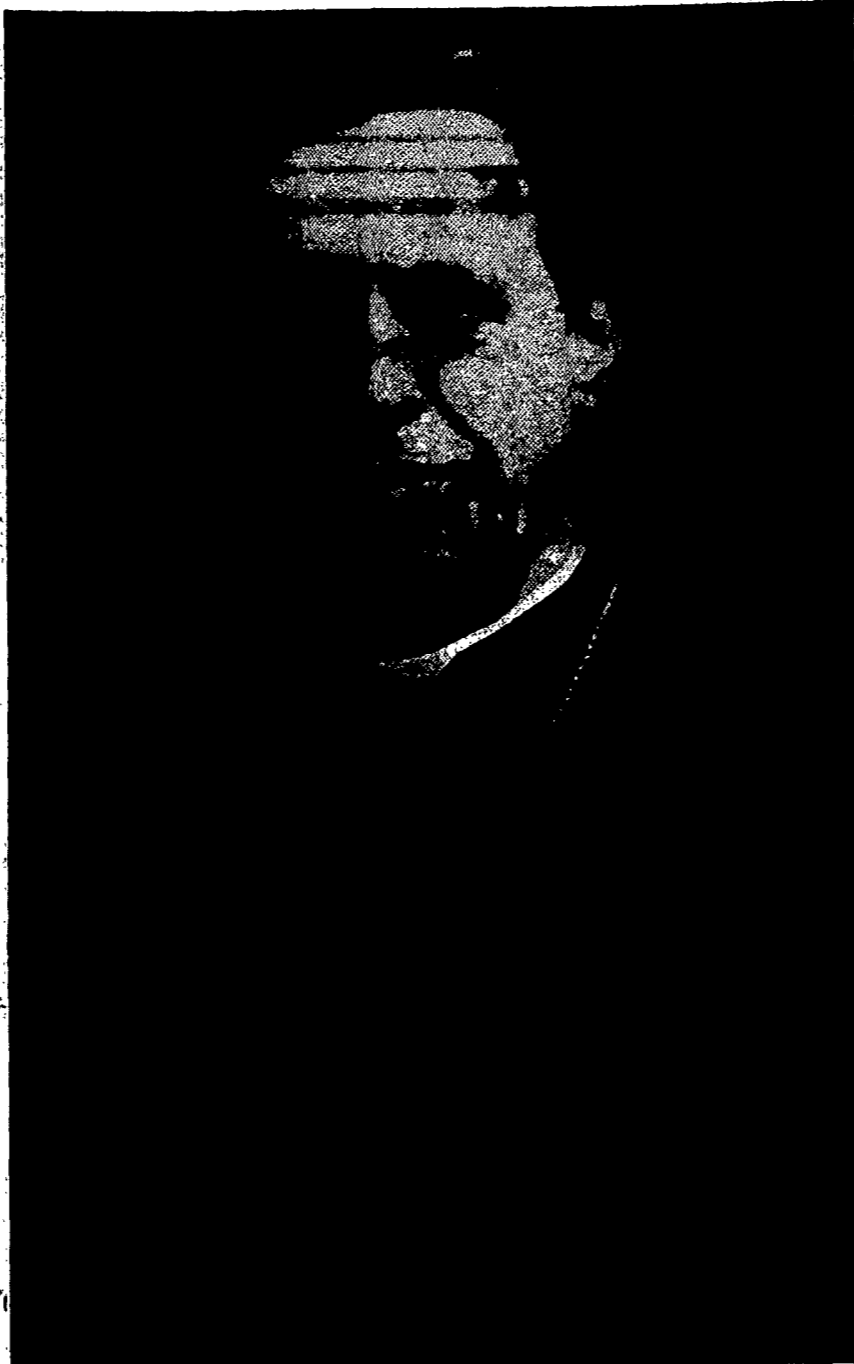
Bishop Hickey was a worthy successor of Bishop McQuaid in his zeal for the religious education of children. As Bishop he followed the wisdom and example of his predecessor.

Already in 1902, while pastor of the Cathedral, he had begun a commercial school for the graduates of his grammar school. The registration of this school had increased each year. By 1905 its high school department was recognized by the State. Cathedral High, as it was now called, was always his favorite; but its offspring, Aquinas Institute, is Bishop Hickey's greatest monument. Through the years Cathedral High had become too small. On the site of St. Thomas Aquinas, March 7, 1924, ground was broken by the Bishop at the Dewey Avenue site. His Eminence Patrick Cardinal Hayes of New York was present at the ceremony.

Besides inaugurating Aquinas Institute, Bishop Hickey also was instrumental in the building of Mercy High, Nazareth Academy, and the Motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Joseph, all in Rochester; Mercy Hospital in Auburn; and St. Joseph's Hospital in Elmira. Under his direction and inspiration a Jubilee Fund Drive was conducted in 1919 to discharge the debt on St. Bernard's Seminary. A total of \$139,000 was subscribed by the laity alone.

ONE of the Bishop's great achievements was the program of religious instruction for Catholic children in public schools. Working with the Board of Education he secured the "release time" program which later was to become state law.

Praising him for his work, the



ARCHBISHOP THOMAS F. HICKEY

... Second Bishop of Rochester

Most Rev. Walter A. Ferry, Bishop of Syracuse, said in the funeral eulogy, "He will be remembered as the man largely responsible for bringing religious teaching to public school children by his sponsorship of special classes in religious instruction."

In October, 1928, the Bishop made his decision to lay down the reins of office. On Oct. 31, Mgr. John F. O'Hern, the Vicar General, announced: "... the 20 years of earnest work in building up the Kingdom of God has left its mark on the bishop ... Pope Pius XI on the occasion of accepting Bishop Hickey's resignation wished to bestow added honor upon him for his years of service; he has raised him to a dignity above any yet bestowed on him, appointing him to the archiepiscopal See of Wilmington."

Even in his retirement Archbishop Hickey continued to teach some classes at Nazareth College, Mercy High, and Aquinas, as well as to give

frequent lectures and conferences at St. Bernard's Seminary. Throughout his long career he was noted for "rare ability as an orator and public speaker." He also continued for some years to attend many ceremonial functions.

Archbishop Hickey died at St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester Dec. 16, 1940. His body lay in state at the bishop's residence on East Ave. while the entire city paid sincere and reverent tribute to the man. The Most Rev. James E. Kearney, fifth Bishop of Rochester, offered his Funeral Mass, while the Archbishop of New York, the Most Rev. Francis J. Spellman presided.

After witnessing and effecting the growth of the Rochester diocese for nearly 30 years Thomas Hickey had passed from the midst of his flock. But the results of his work, and the memory of his name endure throughout the Diocese.

Diocese Of Rochester Founded In 1868

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In his younger days he had become a volunteer auxiliary chaplain when the Civil War came along. Apart from showing interest in every good community cause, he served for thirty years as a member of the Rochester Park Commission, and as such worked for the beautification of the city and the welfare of its citizens. Consequently, when Bishop McQuaid died on January 18, 1909, shortly after his eighty-fifth birthday not only the members of his own flock but the whole community lamented his loss.

THE Rt. Rev. Thomas Francis Hickey immediately succeeded Bishop McQuaid as Bishop of Rochester. He had been consecrated as Titular Bishop of Berenice in February 18, 1905, and Coadjutor-Bishop of the

Diocese of Rochester with right of succession.

A native Rochesterian, Bishop Hickey was born on February 4, 1861. After studies at St. Andrew's and St. Joseph's Provincial Seminary in Troy, and ordination to the priesthood in 1884, he had done parish work in Geneva, Moravia and Industry, and in more recent years had been Rector of the Cathedral and Vicar-General of the Diocese.

Bishop Hickey's predecessor had laid solid foundations, but there was still much building to do. Sixteen Rochester city parishes had to be established and seven outside the city; and Bishop Hickey accomplished their establishment by the time his administration came to an end.

Of these, three parishes in Rochester and two outside were founded to care for Italian congregations; one

St. Theresa's Church, for Rochester's Polish congregation. The latter was placed in charge of the Polish Franciscan Conventual Fathers who at the same time assumed the management of the twenty-two year old St. Hyacinth's Polish parish in Auburn.

ST. BERNARD'S Seminary was in full swing by this time, and provided a sufficiency of priests for the diocese. For all these diocesan priests and for the faithful of the diocese in general, Bishop Hickey convened two diocesan synods, the Third synod of Rochester on June 9, 1914, the Fourth on May 15, 1924.

It was during his episcopate in 1915 that the Laymen's Retreat League, which is still flourishing, was founded.

Parochial schools were established

as a matter of course in most new parishes founded under Bishop Hickey. Higher education was given increasing attention.

Another religious community introduced into the diocese in the days of Bishop Hickey was the Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity better known as the Trinitarian Sisters.

His was an era of good works, too. The Charles Settlement house, pioneer institution of its sort in the diocese, was founded in Rochester in 1913. The Syracuse Franciscan Sisters of the Third Order inaugurated a new Catholic Hospital, Mercy Hospital, in Auburn in 1918. The Rochester Catholic Charities had meanwhile been put on an organized basis, and its work was expanding rapidly. Besides being an era of good

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