

# Our Lady Of Perpetual Help Parish Reaches Half-Century Mark

Celebration of 50 years as a parish will be marked by the pastor and parishioners of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Rochester next Sunday, June 6. His Excellency Bishop Kearney will offer a Pontifical Mass of Thanksgiving at 10:30 a.m. in the church.

By 1904, the northern part of Rochester had witnessed a rapid development. The great distance between St. Michael and Holy Redeemer parishes made it feasible to organize a new parish in this section of the city.

In April of that year, His Excellency Bishop McQuaid appointed the Rev. John P. Schellhorn, assistant pastor of St. Michael's Church, as the first rector of the new parish to be built on Joseph Ave., later to be known as Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church.

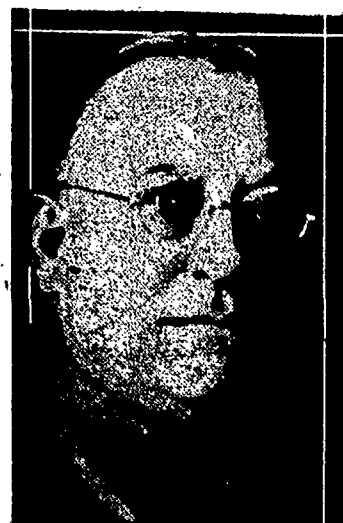
Formal announcement of the formation of the new parish was made by the Rev. Mathias J. Hargather in St. Michael's Church on Sunday, April 30, 1904. This was to be the twentieth Catholic parish in the diocese of Rochester.

To a representative of the Catholic Citizen Father Hargather said:

"It has long been planned to erect another church in the northern part of the city. With that in view, options have been secured on a number of pieces of property and a selection will be made next week.

"I am sorry to lose Father Schellhorn," he said, "as he is a hard worker, conscientious in everything he has undertaken. He has done much for St. Michael's Church during the seven years he has been assistant pastor."

Joseph Keller was named as his first trustee by Father Schellhorn.



Monsignor John Schellhorn, founder and first pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, died on Sept. 29, 1951.

born on May 4, 1904 and George J. Maier was appointed, second trustee on May 6. Steps were taken to incorporate the new parish.

Before this could be accomplished, however, it would be necessary to name the church. Mr. Andrew Wollensak, a trustee of St. Michael's Church, and a close friend of the new rector, asked for the privilege of naming the new church in honor of Our Lady because of his great devotion to Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

PERMISSION WAS granted by Bishop McQuaid and Father Schellhorn granted Mr. Wollensak's wish. The new parish, therefore, was called Our Lady of Perpetual Help. The beautiful statue of Our Lady of Perpetual Help and a donation of \$1,000 were given to the church for the privilege accorded Mr. Wollensak.

Application for incorporation was made at the first trustee meeting held on May 31, 1904. Present at this meeting along with Father Schellhorn and his two trustees were Bishop McQuaid and the Rev. Thomas F. Hickey, vicar-general.

Incorporation was realized on June 20, 1904, and the corporate title became "Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Rochester, New York."

At the second trustee meeting on June 2, 1904, the resolution was passed that with the approbation of Bishop McQuaid, property be purchased for the church, school building and parsonage from Frank X. Foery and Mary E. Foery.

THIS TRACT OF land was acquired. It was planned to accommodate the combination church and school, the rectory and the convent on its nearly three acres, a space left vacant north of the proposed building was to accommodate a new church when the congregation had outgrown the first structure.

By the end of June 1904, plans for a new combination church and school were submitted by architect W. Foster Kelly.

Construction on the original combination church and school of Our Lady of Perpetual Help parish began on July 19, 1904, with the Rev. John P. Schellhorn laying the first stone in place. By September the building was ready for the laying of the cornerstone.

On Sunday, September 11, 5,000 people assembled on the grounds of the new building, on the street and on adjacent lots to witness the ceremony. A pro-

cession formed at St. Michael's Church at 3 p.m. and marched down Clifford and Joseph Avenues to the new church.

Led by Hebing's Band were the Regiment of the Knights of St. John, members of the C.M.B.A., C.Y.M.C., St. Leo and St. Anthony societies of St. Michael's Church, and St. Jacob's and St. Fidelis societies of Holy Redeemer Church.

WITH IMPRESSIVE ceremony, His Excellency Bishop McQuaid laid the cornerstone assisted by Father Schellhorn, the new pastor. The Rev. Mathias J. Hargather, rector of St. Michael's, was deacon; the Rev. Joseph Miller of Webster, subdeacon; the Rev. Leo G. Hofschneider, master of ceremonies.

The Rev. Emil Gefell of St. Andrew's Seminary and the Rev. John Petter of St. Bernard's Seminary were the chanters of the litany.

Placed in the cornerstone was a tin box containing copies of newspapers of the day's issue recording the accounts of the ceremonies, coins of the current year, a history of the organization of the parish, and a list of the donors for the new church building.

After the cornerstone was laid, Bishop McQuaid, accompanied by the dignitaries, marched around the walls, blessing them with holy water.

Then the Bishop addressed the assembled throng. In the course of his remarks, he said:

"THIS CHURCH TODAY has its cornerstone solemnly blessed. It comes in the spirit of peace and goodwill for everybody. It comes in the fulfillment of the words of Christ spoken nearly 2,000 years ago.

"Our religion is a religion of sacrifice in Holy Mass, in divine worship, in all its workings. When people enter here they enter to pray, because this is the house of prayer.

"They come to worship, because it is a house of worship. They come to acknowledge the power of God. They come with humble souls to kneel in worship. The church will be the house of God because God will be in it.

"This lower floor will be the church proper, the upper one for the school. The church has not divorced education from religion. It permits no divorce of man and wife; so it permits no divorce of religion from education.

"So while the sacred practices are carried on in the church below, the blessed work of instructing in the same holy things will go on in the rooms above, the young will have to learn that God is supreme."

Then on Jan. 22, 1905 the church was dedicated and the first service held. A procession wound its way about the walls of the building, inside and out, during which Bishop McQuaid blessed the building.

Following the dedication proper, Solemn High Mass was celebrated by Father Hargather, assisted by the Rev. Jacob Staub as deacon and the Rev. Bernard Gefell as subdeacon.

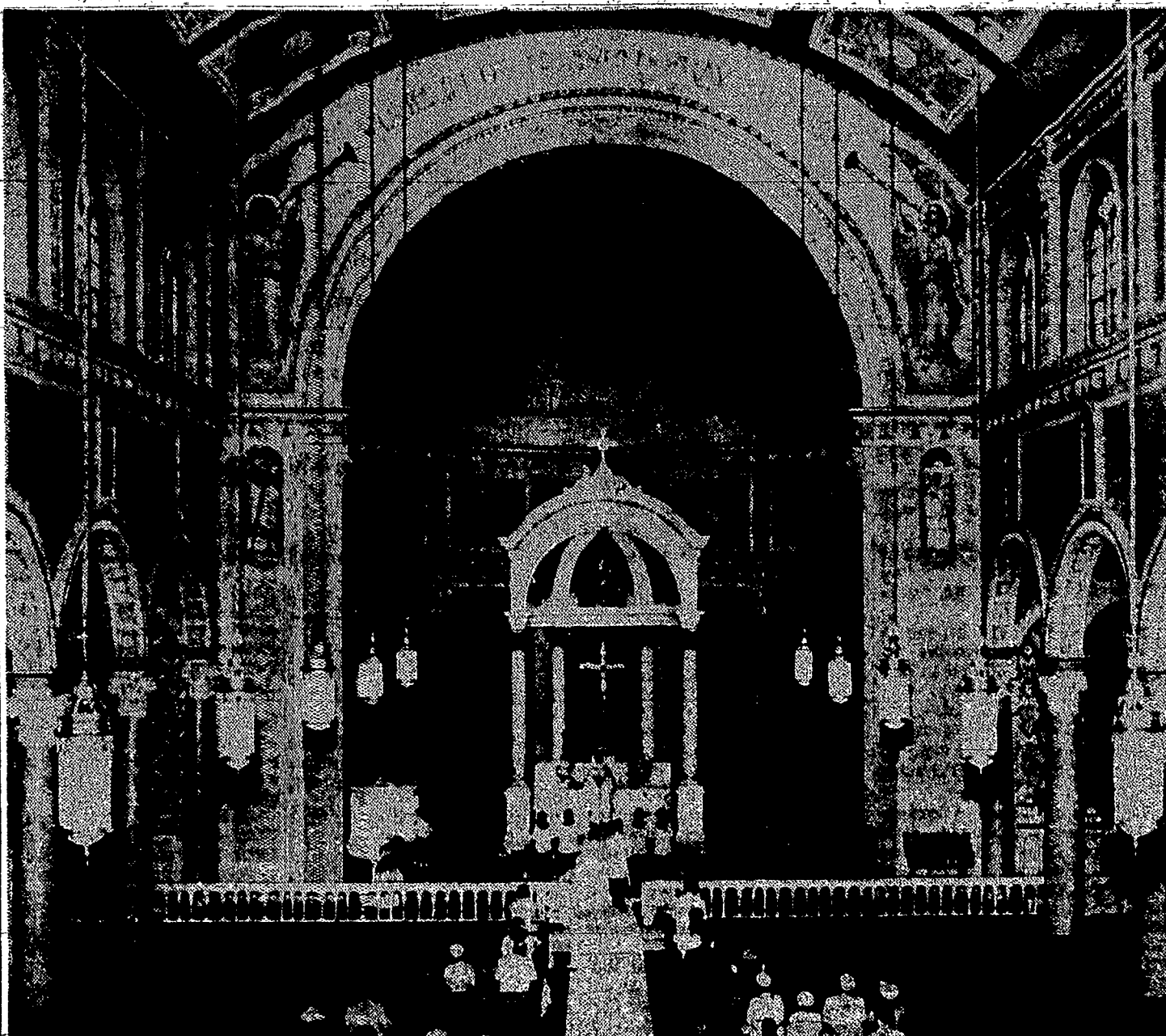
The Rev. Dr. Andrew E. Neenan of St. Bernard's Seminary acted as master of ceremonies. Other priests in the sanctuary were the Rev. Dr. Sinclair, and the Reverend Fathers John M. Petter, James J. Hartley, Angelo Lugero and John P. Schellhorn.

Bishop McQuaid congratulated the good people whose earnest efforts had made possible the erection of the new church, and urged a continuance of those same efforts to the building of the parish. Continuing he said:

"We should give thanks for the unity and harmony of effort, no fault finding or opposition, but glorious cooperation. By the church and school we make our Catholic people what they are, because from their younger days we train them in that blessed religion which our Lord Jesus Christ has given us.

"This ought to be of all countries in the world a Christian country. Here we have liberty; here we have, I may say, almost the pick of Europe coming to our shores; not the filled nobility, but good honest men and women. If we are to hold these people, we are to do so by the multiplication of churches, by our schools and by a thorough Christian teaching."

In the evening solemn vespers were sung in the new church which was filled to capacity. During the service Father Schellhorn blessed a beautiful statue of Our Lady of Perpetual Help which had shortly before been imported from Paris.



INTERIOR OF OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP CHURCH, Joseph Avenue, Rochester, where Pontifical Mass will be celebrated Sunday in observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the parish.

A month later the rectory which had been begun in Oct. 1904 was completed, and now in Feb. 1905 it was ready for occupancy.

DECORATED WITH flowers and palms, the new parish Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help celebrated its first Easter Sunday. Arrangements provided for illuminating the panel at night. This panel was a gift to the church from George F. Lorenz and Joseph H. Oberlies.

In the copper-domed bell tower, which rises 110 feet on the south side of the facade, are four large bells donated by members of the parish and the schoolchildren. The largest of these bells weighs 2,000 lbs.

The interior of the church is in Italian Renaissance of Luca Della Robbia 15th century design. Windows are of English cathedral amber glass, and the altars, altar rail and shrines are all of imitation marble. The Purgatory group shrine in the rear of the church was made in Tyrol and is said to be one of only three in the United States. The church has a seating capacity of 900.

WITH HIS EXCELLENCY Bishop Hickey officiating, the cornerstone of the new church was laid on Sunday, June 20, 1925. In his address Bishop Hickey paid tribute to Father Schellhorn and his assistants for the rapid development of the parish.

On May 30, 1926 the dedication of the new church took place. This date also marked the 30th anniversary of Father Schellhorn's ordination to the priesthood. A procession from the rectory escorted Bishop Hickey to the new church where he celebrated Pontifical High Mass and delivered the dedicatory address. In the evening solemn vespers and benediction were held.

With the completion of the new church, the former church was remodeled into new schoolrooms, and the intention of ultimately using the entire structure as a parochial school was realized. The school enrollment had now reached 500 pupils.

Another of the original four teachers, Sister Ernesta, died at the very beginning of this golden year, on January 24. For 48 years Sister Ernesta had taught several generations of parishioners.

Sister Anita, who though not a member of the first faculty, has labored for over 30 years in the parish, first as second-grade teacher and later in performing the housekeeping duties in the present convent.

and people alike were planning to commemorate this event in a fitting manner. It also marked the 25th anniversary of the parish.

On Sunday morning at 10:30 a.m. a solemn Pontifical Mass was celebrated by His Excellency Bishop O'Hern. Assisting the Bishop were the Rt. Rev. Msgr. William M. Hart, assistant priest; the Rev. John J. Bresnahan and the Rev. John O'Brien, deacons of honor; the Rev. Ferdinand E. Schied, deacon; the Rev. Henry Bleier, subdeacon; the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Andrew B. Meenan, master of ceremonies; and the Rev. Michael W. Wurzer, assistant master of ceremonies.

The first graduating class from Our Lady of Perpetual Help school had just four members: Anna Kramer, Rose Schell, Frances Singer and Mary Willis.

In twenty years the parish had developed rapidly from some 250 families to more than 600, and plans were considered for a new church. On April 15, 1925 the permit for the erection of a new church building in Joseph Avenue was granted by the city Superintendent of Building.

Designed by Joseph H. Oberlies and George F. Lorenz, the new church is of Italian Renaissance architecture, with cream shade pressed brick and trimmed with terra cotta and cast stone.

A LIFE-SIZE has relief panel of the Blessed Virgin, modeled after the picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in the Church of San Alfonso in Rome, stands in the apex of the church. More than four months were required to construct the panel. Above it is a canopy of solid gold, and the halo surrounding the Blessed Virgin is also of solid gold.

With 30 separate pieces of terra cotta, weighing approximately one-half ton, great difficulty was experienced in produc-

ing the desired color effect. Beneath this inset in a terra cotta panel is the inscription "Our Lady of Perpetual Help." Arrangements provided for illuminating the panel at night. This panel was a gift to the church from George F. Lorenz and Joseph H. Oberlies.

Also present to help observe this Silver Jubilee were the Most Rev. Emmett M. Walsh, Bishop of Charleston, S. C., about 50 priests and a large number of lay visitors, including the former mayor of Buffalo, Hon. Frank X. Schwalb and Mrs. Schwalb.

PRECEDING THE Mass, Bishop O'Hern and attending priests were escorted from the rectory to the church by the military staff of the Knights of St. John of which Father Schellhorn was chaplain; by the Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus in full regalia; St. John's Benevolent Society and by the children of the parish.

In his sermon that day Bishop O'Hern paid tribute to the work and fidelity of the rector of the church, to Father Hargather who "planned and sponsored it from the very beginning" and to the priests and Sisters who helped build the spirit of faith so ably and well in the parish.

He reviewed the early days of the parish and quoted the late Bishop McQuaid's address at the cornerstone-laying of the first church 25 years earlier. In closing Bishop O'Hern said:

"This building will stand for generations as a monument to the leadership of the pastor, and to the faith, devotion and loyalty of the people of this parish.

"We congratulate the pastor, who has the unique distinction of having served this congregation as its spiritual leader for the entire 25 years."

The church choir, under the direction of Professor Joseph F. Schwartz, gave a rendition of Mozart's Twelfth Mass, obtained especially for this occasion.

The following evening in the school hall, Father Schellhorn was presented a substantial purse by Norbert Streib on behalf of the parishioners.

Shortly thereafter the Scout movement was introduced in the parish when Troop 32 was organized. Through their diligent efforts in various fund-raising projects, the Cubs, Scouts and Explorer Post have presented checks to Father Hoefen for the church fund.

Scouting further expanded and a troop of Girl Scouts and Brownies were organized in the parish.

Under Father Hoefen's direction a Credit Union was established in Our Lady of Perpetual Help parish and it meets each Tuesday evening for the transaction of business.

Laying the cornerstone for the new convent of Our Lady of Perpetual Help parish in August, 1941 proved to be the last official function performed by Monsignor Schellhorn, pastor-emeritus. For on September 29, 1941 he was called to his eternal reward.

IN SUBSEQUENT years the church debt was gradually being reduced, and in 1948 Father Hoefen happily informed the congregation that the church corporation was now free of all indebtedness.

The old rectory had long outgrown the needs of the parish. Office space was the very minimum, and it was no longer an adequate dwelling for the priests of the parish.

From April 18-30, 1945, an in-

terview drive was launched to raise \$25,000 towards the building of a new rectory.

At a meeting March 23, 1950 Father Hoefen, with the trustees Fred A. Imo and Michael Willis, received the plans for the proposed rectory.

Since the new structure was to be erected on the same site, the old rectory had to be removed. Parishioners and neighbors watched as the old house was slowly moved to its new location at 41 Long St. When it was finally settled in its new foundation, the priests accomplished it until the completion of the new building.

Designed to harmonize with the convent on the opposite side of the church, the new rectory embodies all the features and requirements necessary for the conduct of parish affairs and the maintenance of parochial life.

In appearance the church, rectory and convent of Our Lady of Perpetual Help parish present a unity and harmony in architectural style and together should fulfill their purpose for many decades to come.

June 17, 1951 marked the formal opening of the new rectory. On this day too, Father Hoefen observed the 40th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood.

A SOLEMN JUBILEE Mass was celebrated on the pastoral feast of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Assisting Father Hoefen at Mass were the Rev. John C. Newcomb as deacon and the Rev. Thomas C. Talarida, C.S.C., a newly ordained parishioner as subdeacon.

Father Hoefen was escorted from the rectory to the church by the First Communion class, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Commandery and Auxiliary, Knights of St. John, the Catholic War Veterans and Auxiliary, Boy Scouts and Cubs.

In the afternoon the parishioners made the Holy Year pilgrimage. A reception followed in the school hall in honor of Father Hoefen and a purse was presented to the pastor by the parishioners in recognition of his zealous and untiring service he has given to his parish and to his people.

During the following year the parking area was enlarged and surfaced. To celebrate its opening, an outdoor fête was held in the area on Saturday, June 28, 1952 under the auspices of St. John's Benevolent Society.

Under consideration for some time was the redecoration of the church. Necessarily this had been delayed while efforts were made to repair leakage at various points in the roof.

To insure complete protection against further water damage, it was necessary to replace completely the red tile roof. When this work was finished the redecoration of the church was undertaken.

Deparato Studios of New York City, church decorators, were engaged by Father Hoefen, and in June 1953 the work was begun.

WEEK BY WEEK the work progressed. The beauty of the church interior was brought out in soft colors.

Artistic, lantern-style, fixtures afford the maximum of light. Along the side walls the 12 Apostles are colorfully pictured. In the niches below the decorative titles of Our Lady, chosen from the Litany of Loreto, are symbolized. In the sanctuary panels, the joyful mysteries of the Rosary are portrayed in rich color.

Into this setting a new baldachin altar has been placed. The portrayal of The Last Supper has been retained from the former altar. The new bronze tabernacle with the inscription "Fides Viue" was the gift of the Girl Scouts.

In the canopy above the altar, against a golden background, is enshrined a beautiful picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Between the pillars supporting the baldachin hangs an exquisite crucifix whose life-like appearance is an inspiration to prayerful meditation.

"High above the altar in the heavenly blue dome stands Our Lady, intermediary between her children and her Divine Son, while climbing the arch above is the inscription, carrying heavenward our prayer, 'Queen of Heaven, pray for us.'"

The full beauty of the sanctuary may be emphasized by the channel lighting placed in the arch of the sanctuary.

In the first week of November 1953 the redecoration of the church was completed, a beautiful tribute to God and His Blessed Mother. On Sunday, November 15, during Forty-Hour Devotion, the first Solemn High Mass at the new altar was celebrated.

June 6, 1954 is a day of joy and thanksgiving for the members of Our Lady of Perpetual Help parish. "It is a happy thought that 50 years dedicated to Our Lady of Perpetual Help should culminate in the year apart by Pope Pius XII as Mary's Year."

## 17 Assistant Pastors Listed

Seventeen priests have served Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church as assistant pastors during the 50 years' history of the parish. They are: The Reverend Fathers Ernest Zegan (deceased), J. Edward Bayer (deceased), John F. Gefell (deceased), Edward J. Eschrich, Michael W. Wurzer, Ralph J. Meyer, Charles J. Ann, Frederick J. Walk, John J. Bohmstedt (deceased), Jacob H. Kessler, William Tobin, Joseph G. Merkel, Milton J. John C. Newcomb, Eugene H. McFarland, David E. Singerhoff, and James F. Baker.

On July 1, 1905, he was named pastor emeritus of the parish he had founded 25 years before.

On Sept. 29, 1936, His Excellency Archbishop Mooney appointed the Rev. Frank J. Hoefen as the second pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church.

Father Hoefen came to the new parish from Holy Trinity Church in Webster, but he was well-known to many parishioners of Our Lady of Perpetual Help parish. He had grown up in St. Michael's parish and had served as assistant pastor of that church whose rector, Father Hargather, had sponsored the foundation of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church.

Shortly after his appointment, Father Hoefen inaugurated the Novena devotions to Our Lady of Perpetual Help, which were held on Tuesday evenings.

These services are now in their eighteenth year of homage to the Patroness of the parish, Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

In response to an invitation from Father Hoefen, 200 men assembled in the church for special services in connection with the formal establishment of the Holy Name Society. This was Sunday afternoon, October 31, 1937.

THE RT. REV. MSGR. F. William Sluiter, Diocesan Director of the Holy Name Society, addressed the men on the nature, purpose and benefits of the organization. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament concluded the services.

A meeting and election of officers was held later in the school hall, and on November 14 of that year a corporate Communion was held as a spiritual bouquet to the new Bishop of the Diocese, His Excellency Bishop Kearney.

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AIR VIEW of buildings comprising the modern plant of Our Lady of Perpetual Help parish. Church building (center) is flanked (left in photo) by the parish school and rectory and by the convent (right in photo).