

## Personal Glimpses

By BISHOP LAWRENCE B. CASEY  
Former Secretary To Bishop Kearney

Here Bishop Casey, Auxiliary to the Bishop of Rochester, recalls some random impressions from the nine years during which he served as personal secretary to Bishop Kearney. Putting down his recollections as his memory recalls them, and without regard to importance or time sequence, Bishop Casey gives us an intimate glimpse into the life of our beloved Chief Shepherd.

**B**ISHOP KEARNEY could not have had one Sunday in 1943. The day began at 8:00 with a Mass at the Cathedral and a talk at the noon breakfast of the St. John's Fish Club. Then off to Geneva for the graduation exercises of Des Moines School at 11:00. Down the Seneca Lake road to St. Patrick's for the commencement exercises of Elmira Catholic High School at 1:30. The Bishop's address to the graduates was entirely different from the talk he gave in Geneva.

Monsignor James Griffin was celebrating his 55th anniversary of ordination, so we dropped in at the CITY'S Rectory. Coming to such felicitations and have supper at the Rectory to Rochester, at the Bishop's house at 8:30 to give a talk to the boys and talk to them about the future.

At 9:15 we left for the Columbus Civic Center for the opening session of the Knights of St. John. Though his part of the program would be confined to presiding over the delegates, but was scheduled for the next day at 10:00. We kept quiet during the day, but he thought.

In his address, the Bishop took as his theme the life of St. John the Baptist, patron of the Order, and applied it to lives of the Knights of St. John. The effort he put into the talk to give us only fifteen minutes preparation. As we got out of the car at 11:00, he remained in the car for a bit tired.

**H**E HAD HAPPY memories of his 10 years in Salt Lake City. One of the Salt Lake people is how ready he was to go to the Forty Hours devotion in the parish churches several hundred miles from Salt Lake City to preside over the pastors' hour of lessons. He did not forget these past years after his transfer to Rochester. In Christmas, many packages for Salt Lake left 947.

The Bishop was a relaxed passenger on a confirmation trip and no back-seat driver. It would be interesting to estimate how many hundred times he has traveled up and down the diocese in the past 20 years on confirmations and other church ceremonies; how many persons he has confirmed (probably well over the 100,000 mark).

He has ridden on practically every road in the diocese, even the small country roads. One Sunday, we were on a flight schedule pushing north from Bath for an evening confirmation at Penn Yan. The secretary remarked, "We're going to be 15 minutes late." "Well, relax. They can't begin until we get there," was his rejoinder.

Leaving 947 one Sunday morning on a confirmation tour, he said, "Better turn around, I've forgotten my glasses." "We can turn around, but you're wearing your glasses right now."

**D**URING THE WAR, Bishop Kearney made many trips to Sampson Naval Training Station. Perhaps the

most interesting was a Solent, England, in the Christmas Mass. The Bishop celebrated Mass at the cathedral in Bath, England, and the Bishop of Bath, England, addressed the congregation. The Bishop of Bath, England, addressed the congregation. The Bishop of Bath, England, addressed the congregation.

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Once I was preparing an article, we wanted to quote a phrase from Shakespeare but had forgotten the exact wording. So we went to the Bishop's study to ask him. "That's from Richard III, Act I, Scene One," he replied off the whole quotation. On occasion, quoting poetry in his talks, he might forget particular lines. But he would continue improvising words as he went along with something false, correct meter and all.

**H**E HAS ALWAYS had the good habit of reading the newspaper. He has read the newspaper every day of his life. He has read the newspaper every day of his life.

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The Bishop has a way of talking. He has a way of talking. He has a way of talking. He has a way of talking.

His daily walks from 947 East Avenue to the cathedral were an important part of his life. He has read the newspaper every day of his life.

The dedication of a new church was always a delightful day for the Bishop. He took pride in the title, "Builder of Tabernacles," and his sermons on these occasions expressed his joy that the Lord would have a new home. If his schedule permitted, he would stand at the entrance of the church after the ceremony and greet the people as they came out. Priests and people alike have always found him gracious and easy to approach, with no stiffness or false sense of dignity.

We were told by a New York



Bishop Kearney congratulates his former secretary, Bishop Casey, following his consecration as Auxiliary on May 5, 1953, at Sacred Heart Cathedral.

post that on the occasion of his farewell reception at St. Francis Xavier of the Bronx church where he had been pastor, the Priests' Choir of which he had been a member gathered to surround him before he left for Salt Lake City. The new Bishop could not stay in the audience but jumped up on the stage and joined the singing himself.

Musicians around the diocese, particularly directors of choral groups, have found their Bishop a very appreciative listener and a perceptive critic. He has many favorite selections, but among operatic and choral works Handel's "Messiah" and the song "Benedictus Stream" rank near the top of the list.

He could be fast on a comeback but was gentle about it. Shortly after his arrival, he said a feast-day Mass for the principal of a girls' high school in the presence of the students. He presumed her name in religion was that of the saint of the day. It wasn't. Reminded of the fact, he arose to his feet with a graceful apology, concluding with an apt quote from Shakespeare: "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet."

**O**NE DAY WE WALKED into his study just before we had to leave on a confirmation. He was ransacking the drawers of his desk. "Looking for a medal. We have to confirm that sick child on the way to the church, and I want to give her something as a souvenir of her confirmation day." The personal touch... He had been unofficial chaplain at the Fifth Avenue Hospital in New York for ten years while assistant at St. Cecilia's on 105th Street, and his devotion to the sick was legendary.

He is a bishop but primarily he is a parish priest. Perhaps this is the reason he likes so much to go through St. Mary's Hospital and Iola Sanitarium blessing throats on St. Blaise's Day.

A banquet or a formal testimonial dinner can be on occasion rather

boring. Your Bishop has attended hundreds of these affairs in the line of duty. Those present have been impressed by his affability and his evident enjoyment in the proceedings (except when the speeches dragged on far into the evening). His ability to cover the banquet circuit and like it, can be attributed to his genuine interest in people.

His high office, however, has been a drawback at banquets, a fact he has stated publicly many times. As the ranking person present, he was usually the last on the program and had to sit there while the other speakers exhausted the subject. His technique on these occasions was to link together the thoughts of the preceding speakers into some sort of unity, and suffice the whole with his own personal philosophy. One quality which has endeared him to countless audiences: Brevity. He never talks too long.

The smile of pride on his face the day the new St. Andrew's Rectory was formally dedicated. The project was close to his heart.

He inaugurated Family Communion Sunday on the feast of the Holy Family in the diocese nearly twenty years ago, and suggested in his letter to the priests that the family take mother out to breakfast after the Mass. There was some question in the minds of the Chancery officials about the response of the people. He said, "Wait and see." On the first Family Communion Sunday, the leading downtown restaurants ran out of bacon and eggs and rolls by 10:00 A.M.

**I**F HIS SCHEDULE permitted, he never turned down an invitation to go to a parish function. It might be a simple Holy Name or Rosary Society dinner, but he liked to be there because it kept him in touch with parish life. As the years passed and his manifold duties increased, he had to decline most of these invitations.

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