

Personal Glimpses

By BISHOP LAWRENCE B. CASEY

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but he did so with real regret. He liked to be with his people.

The Bishop began the practice of having a Christmas dinner and party for all fulltime diocesan workers living in Rochester. As one looked around this gathering of several hundred, he realized how much this Diocese had expanded since the days of Rochester's first Bishop, Bernard J. McQuaid, who once jokingly remarked that he had his office in his hat.

At these Christmas gatherings the Father of the Family made it plain how much he appreciated the devoted and consecrated service his lay workers were giving to the Church and the Diocese.

He never missed saying Mass at Christmas time for the patients at St. Anne's Home for the Aged and has had a real concern for those now in the evening of life.

The Bishop was never one to reveal his inner thoughts on the current scene easily. On occasion his secretary wondered about his reaction to a particular happening. No comment at the time—yet a casual remark dropped weeks after the event took place indicated he had known the complete score all along.

He didn't say much—but he didn't relax much either. His key workers were accustomed to receiving short memos signed "J. E. K." These brief notes were often gentle reminders "to get going" on some project mentioned weeks before.

One quality which endears a superior to his subordinates is understanding patience. In the office we all made our share of mistakes and the Bishop must have been irked more than once. But his patience with our failings was monumental. He never lost his temper even when the errors were major ones. Almost, on occasion, we wished he might explode but he never did.

OF ALL HIS FLOCK, the children were dearest to him. The New Year's Reception held at his home, the annual Blessing of Babies, parties where the alumnae of various high schools and colleges brought their children, were high spots in his calendar and he thoroughly enjoyed his contacts with the youngsters.

After a confirmation, the procession usually arrived at the parish rectory two minutes ahead of the Bishop. He'd still be standing outside the church, blessing infants resting in the arms of their mothers.

In after years when Bishop Kearney's name is mentioned, a whole generation of Catholic high school students will say, "He sure did like to give us days off." At these school gatherings usually there was a "build-up" in his concluding remarks. He kept the youngsters in suspense about whether he would or would not make the welcome announcement. He never really fooled them though, for they knew he would come through with a holiday.

The Mass for him, as for every priest, was the central part of his day. Many a morning, leaving the house to celebrate an early Mass in some parish church, we would note the familiar figure kneeling in his chapel. An early riser, he would have been up long since, making his preparation for his Mass.

He made the task of the Master of Ceremonies at pontifical functions an easy one. No impatience or second-guessing if something went wrong.

Those who attended the annual Priesthood Ordination at the Cathedral in June were always deeply moved at the close of the ceremony when the ordaining prelate came down from his faldstool on the altar

and knelt to receive the first blessing of the young Levites he had just ordained priests. He had followed their seminary career closely, and they knew from his monthly conferences at the seminary that his one concern was that they be good, simple, spiritual priests.

WE VISITED HIM at the hospital the morning of his operation last December. He was lying in bed and from his calm demeanor one would judge that it was a day just like any other. He couldn't have been looking forward to the session in the operating room, but there was no external apprehension or excitement.

Twenty-four years of living up to his episcopal motto: "In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped," made a good preparation for a major event such as this. He was not deeply concerned about the outcome and left the matter entirely in the Lord's keeping.

We have sounded different notes in describing a small part in the life of one man whom we have known intimately. The notes are different, but a masterchord can be detected through the incidents we have narrated—the masterchord which has embodied his whole regime in this diocese—an ever-deepening spiritual life and a solid unity with Christ which have characterized all his labors.

At gatherings of Irish societies on March 17, he liked to listen to the old song, "St. Patrick was a Gentleman." It was fun watching him up there on the dais, his feet keeping time with the music. One felt that the Shepherd of Rochester had come up with the right combination. The combination of saint and gentleman never fails.



First to make obeisance when Bishop Kearney was installed as Fifth Bishop of Rochester, November 11, 1937, was Father Casey, now Auxiliary Bishop.

The
Parish
of the
Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
Brockport

Offer Prayers
and
Best Wishes

To

BISHOP KEARNEY

on his

SILVER JUBILEE