



"Greatest night of my life" said Bishop Kearney when 1952 diocesan campaign for new high schools raised over \$4,000,000. Here Bishop is shown as he received symbolic check from campaign officials (left to right), Robert Ginn, Frederick Tobin, Monsignor Hart, and Harold Coleman.

Bishop Of Rochester—Silver Jubilarian

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that "one of the worst errors of the 19th century was to remove religion from the school and to relegate it to the home and church only."

"We cannot have a strong society," he believes, "unless it is founded on an education which is built on religion and morality as was insisted by our Founding Fathers."

And for the most conscious taxpayer Bishop Kearney frequently makes a practical observation. The construction and operation of Catholic schools represent a tremendous saving in taxes for the citizens who must underwrite the cost of public school education.

In Rochester alone, he has noted more than once, the operation of Catholic schools represents an annual tax saving to the city of well over \$100,000. This impressive example, cited by the Bishop, is based on the average annual pupil cost of education in Rochester public schools and the total enrollment (21,000) of the city's Catholic schools.

THIS CHAMPION of Catholic education, oddly enough, is himself a product of New York City's public schools and a former teacher in that city's public schools. He has a sincere respect for the public schools and public school teachers whom, he says, "are a very dedicated group of people."

His own experience, however, of teaching in the public school, where religious study is not permitted, filled him with a sense of futility. "As dedicated as I tried to be in the role of a public school teacher," he recalls, "I became convinced that I could not give the child enough unless I could teach him about God."

Not only his early experience as a public school teacher but also his many years of association, as priest and bishop, with the work of the Catholic schools have given him the conviction that religious training and instruction must be a vital part of the education of youth.

This is all seen in the personal attention which he gives the schools of his Diocese. Each September finds him visiting every high school, college and seminary of the Diocese. This is for the purpose of celebrating Mass and addressing student body and faculty by way of formally opening the new academic year.

When June comes around, these

schools must arrange their own separate dates on different evenings at the Bishop's insistence, so that he may be able to personally present diplomas to the graduates.

During the scholastic year too his continuous visits make him a popular and friendly figure to diocesan youth. Students and faculties welcome the Bishop's presence in their midst not only because his arrival may herald an unexpected holiday but also because they appreciate the inspiration and encouragement of his words.

He himself never seems happier than when he is gathered with a group of young people in their school chapel or assembly hall or in attendance at a school concert play or graduation exercise.

His interest in youth is not confined to the students of his own diocese. He is kindly as to the needs of the many other Catholic youngsters in the Diocese who necessarily must attend public or non-Catholic schools.

These he tries to reach through a well-organized catechetical or "Released Time" program in the case of elementary and high schools or through special chaplains in the case of the non-Catholic colleges or academies. The past year saw over 31,000 pupils in the Diocese receiving religious instruction under the "Released Time" program.

No one is more alert to the importance of bringing religious instruction to the Catholic student enrolled in the non-Catholic school than the Bishop himself.

To the priests, Sisters and lay people in charge of this work the Bishop continually stresses its importance. Remember, he points out, "in many cases the only religious instruction that some of these children are going to receive is what we are able to give them. Therefore, though we may face difficulties in this work we must do our best to give these children all the knowledge of God we can."

THOUGH MANY generations separate him in age from today's youth, the 73-year-old Bishop of Rochester has a practical sympathy with modern teenagers and a sincere, even optimistic, confidence in "our young people" as he calls them.

He refuses to be a defeatist even in the case of those youth who unfortunately come in conflict with

the law. With his old friend, the late Father Flanagan, famous founder of Boy's Town, he seems to share the belief that "there are no bad boys."

Or if there are boys who do make mistakes, at least Bishop Kearney believes, they can be straightened out. He feels that even "Dead End Kids" can make good if they are given the right kind of spiritual direction.

During his first year in Rochester he took great pleasure in going to Elmira Reformatory, in the Southern Tier section of his Diocese, where he dedicated the chapel of St. John Bosco, the first permanent chapel in any New York State penal institution.

On one of his visits to another correctional institution for boys, the State Agricultural and Industrial School at Industry, New York, he did not hesitate to take a hopeful view of the young inmates' future. "You can make a success of your lives," he told them. "In the dictionary of faith, there is no such word as 'failure'."

THE BISHOP of Rochester refuses to panic in the face of the alarming rise in juvenile delinquency. The increase in youthful waywardness has only confirmed him in his feeling that "religion is the solution to the problems facing our youth today. This is why," he adds, "we are caring for over 50,000 children in our own diocesan schools."

This is also why he urges on his own diocesan teachers a fresh interpretation of the "Three R's"—Religion, Reverence and Refinement.

"If you get those three—religion, reverence and refinement—combined in a boy or girl you will have a fine model of Christian life," he says.

He frankly deplores the lack of reverence shown by youth for the Church, the government and the aged but he blames this condition on the modern philosophy which exaggerates the idea that "one person is as good as another."

"A generation is growing up without a sense of reverence," he says. "The current thought that no one is better than anyone else has resulted in an age that has little use for reverence and almost no respect for anybody or anything."

In discussing juvenile fallings, the Bishop does not lay the blame on the youth themselves but points instead the finger of accusation at their

parents and those responsible for training them.

Refinement, he observes, is often lacking in children who come from homes where it is to be expected. Parents, he complains, "surrender too easily to this rough and tumble age which looks upon refinement as a thing of the past."

Here the Bishop also rebukes society in general. "Speech, dress, and habits," he notes, "as presented in television and radio entertainment, give little place to refinement."

Despite problems or even disappointments, the Bishop of Rochester continues to believe in youth. This is why he continues to plan more Catholic schools.

Given the right kind of religious and moral training our modern youth will not fail. This is Bishop Kearney's sincere conviction. Each time he opens a new Catholic school he is paying tribute to American youth. Each time he directs a priest to start a new school he is showing his confidence that our youth will make good.

ANOTHER SOURCE of genuine satisfaction to Bishop Kearney is the erection of new altars and houses of worship. During his twenty years in the Rochester Diocese he has blessed and dedicated an endless chain of new sanctuaries and altars in churches, convents, monasteries, chapels, hospitals, seminaries and schools.

Because of his personal interest in the beautification and establishment of new altars, he is known in his own Diocese as "The Builder of Tabernacles." And his interest in these new tabernacles involves more than their formal dedication. As often as not, it is his own suggestion which inspires the erection of a new chapel or the renovation of an older sanctuary.

In this matter the Bishop's hand is evident in scores of places throughout

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Cover Photo

The full-color photograph of Bishop Kearney used on the cover of this Catholic Courier-Journal supplement marking His Excellency's Silver Jubilee in the episcopacy and 20th year in Rochester was taken by Photographer Lucius Massey of Varden Studios.

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