



Bishop Kearney with Archbishop Ciccognani, Apostolic Delegate (center) and the late Monsignor Edward Lyons (left) inspect construction of new St. Andrew's Seminary which was opened in 1950.

Champion Of Catholic Education

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The school report for 1939 lists 230 religious and 22 lay teachers in the Diocese. The teacher load was moderate with an average of 36 pupils per teacher.

Against this decline in diocesan elementary school registration was the steady increase reported in high school enrollments. First step in the effort to meet this problem came in September, 1939, when the Sisters of St. Joseph organized a new Catholic high school for girls. This was St. Agnes High School, temporary housed in the former St. Agnes Convent, 100 East Main Street.

The early 1940's saw more steps being taken to cope with the growing demands that rising enrollments were making upon Catholic high schools. Bishop Kearney dedicated a new wing for Nazareth Academy in June 1940, and in September, 1941, formally opened the new auditorium-gymnasium classroom wing of Our Lady of Mercy High School.

THEN CAME THE WAR, and with it problems and obstacles to plans for expanding the Catholic educational system. America's entry into the war saw registration in the elementary schools of the Diocese reach its lowest point. In 1941, the total enrollment in the elementary and high schools of the Diocese was 23,315 pupils.

However, the war years were not all gloom. There were also some encouraging signs. The years from 1937 to 1941 saw registration in diocesan high schools continue an upward surge. This reflected the growing conviction and desire in more and more parents to give their children a Catholic high school education.

The problem, as Bishop Kearney and his diocesan educators recognized, was no longer one of trying to sell the merits of Catholic education. The problem now was trying to provide it.

The year of 1941 also saw a halt in the decline of elementary school registration and an upswing set in that is still with us. By 1948, in fact, elementary school enrollment in the Diocese had so exceeded its previous record that all existing school facilities were seriously strained. New construction of parish schools, Bishop Kearney realized, was the only answer to this problem.

Americans settled down to the serious business of fighting the war, at home as well as on the battlefield.

The war also came to the schools.

Not only to share the demands of the war, but to help the boys and girls in a practical way. The boys and girls of the Diocese were encouraged to help in a practical way. They collected 30,000 rosaries, 16,000 medals, 12,000 prayer books, and countless raised-lantern pieces of reading material.

The Bishop also encouraged his

schools to join the drive for religious articles for the servicemen. This campaign in the schools netted some 30,000 rosaries, 16,000 medals, 12,000 prayer books, and countless raised-lantern pieces of reading material.

THE BISHOP was very proud of the record established by his schools

in support of the Red Cross War Fund and the purchase of War Savings Stamps and Bonds. The war years saw the pupils of Rochester diocesan schools set a near record in the purchase of almost 2 million dollars in War Saving Stamps and Bonds. They also made a total contribution of \$14,553.00 to the Red Cross War Fund. Sacrifice, always a prominent feature of Catholic school training, found a patriotic outlet in these hours of our nation's need.

Bishop Kearney could point with pride, during these war years, to the patriotic spirit of his diocesan teachers, nuns as well as laywomen. Despite their preoccupation with the classroom, 50 per cent of the sisters found time to earn first aid certificates, and 25 per cent completed home nursing courses.

The 75th anniversary of the founding of the Diocese of Rochester came in 1943, the very thick of the war years. If there was any bright spot in those gloomy hours for Bishop Kearney, it was in the picture of his diocesan school system, which embraced a total of 93 units in the elementary and secondary field of education. These included 73 parish schools, 7 private elementary schools and child care institutions, 9 four-year high schools, 2 one-year high schools, and 2 commercial high schools.

The war years brought another encouraging development very welcome to a Bishop who wanted to see his Catholic system make progress. First grade enrollment, down almost consistently for a decade, began to show an increase. Important factor in this rise in first grade enrollment was the establishment of new kindergartens in 15 parish schools of the Diocese.

Neither did the war halt entirely all new expansion of elementary schools. In 1943 new parish schools were opened at St. Peter's and Paul's parish in Auburn, and at St. Helen's parish in Gates.

POSTWAR EXPANSION highlighted the next chapter in the history of the Diocese.

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The Carmelite Fathers

Wish to Congratulate

His Excellency

on the
happy occasion

of his

Silver Jubilee

Carmelite Seminary

and

Mt. Carmel High School

Auburn, New York