

## Former Bishops

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O'Hern, third Bishop of the Rochester Diocese won and held that title throughout his brief but energetic years as head of the Rochester See. Men and women of every religious creed and every walk of life counted him as their friend.

Consecrated to the episcopate May 29, 1929, he was destined to serve in that high rank for scarcely four years.

These four years however were marked by an intensive activity which advanced the Catholic faith along educational lines, the establishment of new parishes, improvement of existing facilities for the sick, the aged and the orphaned, and the expansion of Catholic lay organizations.

Within a year of his consecration as bishop he assigned priests to organize seven new parishes, in what was then suburban Rochester. In each case, he stressed the importance of a school connected to each parish.

He also provided for Catholic students in secular colleges by appointing chaplains to supervise Newman Clubs at the University of Rochester, Cornell University and Syracuse University.

New religious orders were directed to the Diocese and there were created the Claretian Sisters, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd and the Sisters of Holy Angels. There for girls in need of guidance.

Franciscan Sisters came to the Diocese at the invitation of Bishop O'Hern to staff St. Margaret Mary's, Our Lady of Good Counsel, St. Theresa's and St. George's schools, Rochester.

Two new high schools were also



BISHOP JOHN FRANCIS O'HERN  
Third Bishop of Rochester

begun during Bishop O'Hern's episcopate: Elmira Catholic High in 1929 and Holy Family in Auburn in 1930.

The Fathers of the Most Precious

Blood were also invited to the Diocese to serve Italian speaking Catholics in the Lexington Ave. section of Rochester.

BISHOP O'HERN coordinated the charitable and educational programs of the entire Diocese by appointing a diocesan charities director and a diocesan superintendent of schools.

His own experience as a curate and as a pastor gave Bishop O'Hern a tender sympathy for those in economic distress. When unemployment became so wide spread during 1930, Bishop O'Hern established emergency relief stations in cooperation with the Rochester Community Chest and initiated a three million dollar building program throughout the Diocese to provide jobs for the needy.

There are still people today who testify that in their hour of urgent need they made their way to the East Avenue residence of the Bishop and found a warm welcome and assistance promptly given them. They also testify that Bishop O'Hern followed up his aid by a subsequent personal call to inquire if more were needed.

In accordance with the wishes of Pope Pius XI for an active laity, Bishop O'Hern fostered and encouraged numerous lay societies in the Diocese and in the parishes.

The National Abolition Society was founded at his suggestion. Catholic physicians were invited to participate in organizing a Catholic medical society. He established the P. V. Name Union to coordinate the activities of Catholic laymen and organized the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women as an affiliate of the National Council of Catholic Women.

Under his direction the Scout program was extended and summer camps for children were built at Canadawaga and Chautauque lakes.

Bishop O'Hern's friendship with the Knights of Columbus was a long-standing one and he shared their pride in the Columbus Civic Center in downtown Rochester. When the financial chaos of the depression made it impossible for the Knights to maintain the building, he arranged for a new diocesan corporation to take over the project.

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