

Former Bishops Of Rochester

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ALTHOUGH OF OBVIOUS Irish descent himself, Bishop O'Hern welded the people of other nationalities to his heart by his thoughtfulness and kindness. He especially proved himself popular with the thousands of Italian Catholics in the Diocese. He studied for the priesthood at the North American College in Rome and mastered their language. Frequently later in Rochester Bishop O'Hern would speak in Italian at a confirmation ceremony or whenever he noticed the presence of Italians urging them to take pride in their heritage and to be loyal to the Catholic traditions of their homeland.

The burdens of his bishopric were never too great for him not to find time to officiate at the wedding of a child he had baptized, conduct the funeral of an old friend or call at the hospital when he heard a sick person had asked to see him.

To keep in touch with the problems and heartaches of his people, Bishop O'Hern spent most of his Saturday evenings in a confessional at St. Patrick's Cathedral.

Born in Olean, N. Y. June 1874, Bishop O'Hern attended parochial school and public high school there. He studied for the priesthood at St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's Seminaries, Rochester, and completed these studies at the North American College in Rome. He was ordained in the Eternal City, Feb. 17, 1901.

He was assigned as assistant pastor in Auburn and Rochester churches and in 1907 was named pastor of St. Patrick's Cathedral. In 1922 he became pastor of Corpus Christi Church and vicar general of the Diocese.

When Bishop Hickey resigned as second Bishop of Rochester in the fall of 1928, Bishop O'Hern was selected by Pope Pius XI to succeed him. Early the following year he was consecrated bishop and gave a sparkling address at his installation on Nov. 22, 1928.

Bishop Edward M. Walsh, who officiated at the funeral of Bishop O'Hern, summed up the life of the "Beloved Bishop" when he said:

"John Francis O'Hern was a man loved for his greatest virtue, the greatest of divine virtues, charity."

CARDINAL MOONEY

APREIATE DIPLOMAT educator and humble priest became Rochester's fourth Bishop.

Today he is a Prince of the Church and heads one of the nation's leading archdioceses.

His Eminence, Edward Cardinal Mooney, now of Detroit, had already been an archbishop for over six years when Pope Pius XI asked him to serve as spiritual shepherd of the Rochester Diocese.

The Cardinal's path to Rochester had crossed oceans and continents and his assignment here proved providential not only for the Church in this Diocese but for the Church throughout the United States.

His priesthood duties following graduation in Rome in 1909 included teaching at the seminary in his home Diocese of Cleveland, directing the Cathedral Latin School there, serving as pastor in his hometown of Youngstown, Ohio, and then as spiritual adviser for his alma mater, the North American College in Rome.

During his stay in Rome, the then Father Mooney was commissioned by Pope Pius XI to serve on a board of theologians headed by Pietro Cardinal Gasparri to draft a new, up-to-date catechism text. The Pope, it is believed, intended to reconvene the ecumenical Vatican Council interrupted in 1870 but his plans did not materialize. The preliminary work of the theologians was not in vain, however, as Pope Pius XI established in 1925 the annual feast of Christ the King to serve as a liturgical defini-



HIS EMINENCE EDWARD CARDINAL MOONEY
Fourth Bishop of Rochester

tion of Catholic doctrine that nations as well as individuals have duties towards God.

AS SPIRITUAL ADVISER for the students, Father and since June 1925 Monsignor Mooney instilled in them a world wide vision of the Church. He organized the Catholic Student Mission Crusade at the College with the double objective of raising funds and prayers for the missionaries.

These mission interests of Monsignor Mooney as well as his widely recognized spiritual talents had not escaped the notice of Roman authorities. When the head of the Propaganda Fide, the Vatican's official missionary coordinating office, was in search of someone to send as apostolic delegate to India, Monsignor Mooney was picked as having the ideal combination of ability and personality.

Cardinal van Rossum, head of the Propaganda, consecrated Monsignor Mooney in the chapel of the North American College Jan. 31, 1926, as titular Archbishop of Irenopolis-Isauria.

In his new role as a diplomat of the Vatican, Archbishop Mooney won respect for the Catholic Church in India's official circles which were dominantly Buddhist and Moslem. He also settled the "double jurisdiction" question, a remnant of sixteenth century Portuguese colonization. Some parishes claimed independence of local Indian bishops, asserting they gave allegiance to their home dioceses in Portugal.

Archbishop Mooney tactfully arranged that these parishes should submit to the Indian prelates and thereby removed a longstanding Por-

tuguese tradition which irked the native Catholics of India.

In 1931, Archbishop Mooney was transferred to Japan as that country's Apostolic Delegate. His accomplishments there as in India spelled greater efficiency for the Church's work for souls. He worked with missionary and native clergy in Japan to coordinate the various religious and educational programs of the Church there, again winning recognition from official government circles.

HIS DIPLOMATIC ability seemed to destiny him to remain indefinitely as a special envoy to handle the Vatican's critical assignments. Then, while on a brief visit to America in 1933, he was named to the Diocese of Rochester which was still in mourning for its late beloved Bishop O'Hern.

As fourth Bishop of Rochester, Archbishop Mooney faced the lean years of depression which ravaged secular and religious institutions throughout the country. He called into play his experience as a realist and diplomat to pilot the Rochester Diocese through chaotic financial waters.

Archbishop Mooney took the pioneering step to provide Catholic college facilities for men in the Rochester area by establishing the Niagara University College of Business Administration in 1933 in classrooms at the Columbus Civic Center. He also brought the Basilian Fathers to assume direction of Aquinas Institute in 1937.

Also during Archbishop Mooney's episcopate in Rochester, the Society of the Divine Word opened its St. Michael's Mission House, a preparatory seminary, at Hemlock Lake.

To furnish diocesan seminarians from outside the city of Rochester with more adequate living accommodations, Archbishop Mooney opened St. William House in 1936 which today serves as faculty residence of St. Andrew's Seminary on Buffalo Rd.

The old St. Patrick's Cathedral, once the heart of a strongly Catholic residential section, by 1937 was surrounded by industrial expansion in that area. Church trustees had to compete with the repair machines and the clutter of traffic. Archbishop Mooney secured permission from Rome to use Sacred Heart Church on Flower City Park as a Pro-Cathedral and to sell the old cathedral property to the Eastman-Kodak Company. Included in the sale were the old Cathedral, the nearby rectory and Chartery, and the red brick St. Andrew's Seminary building.

The building which had served as Cathedral Hall and had witnessed many social events of the old Cathedral High School was remodeled into a church and is today's St. Patrick's Church on Plymouth Avenue North.

BEFORE THE DOORS of the old Cathedral were closed for the last time in September, 1937, one of the most colorful ceremonies ever enacted in the venerable edifice raised a Rochester priest to the ranks of the hierarchy. Father Walter A. Fahey, director of Catholic Charities under Archbishop Mooney, was consecrated as fifth Bishop of Syracuse.

At this same time, Pope Pius XI raised the Diocese of Detroit to archdiocesan status and looked to his able diplomat Archbishop Mooney to organize the new ecclesiastical province.

Four years would seem to be a brief span for a man to leave his mark but the stamp of Archbishop Mooney is still apparent throughout the Rochester Diocese.

He never lost his missionary spirit and on one occasion frankly told an interfaith gathering, "I would wish for nothing quite so much as that all Jews should be Christians, and that all Christians be Catholics."

In order to attain this ideal of bringing his fellow citizens to a knowledge of the faith, Archbishop Mooney established the custom of confirming adult converts in special rites separate from the children and taking the opportunity to urge them to become "apostles" to their friends and associates. The effectiveness of this personal appeal has doubled the number of converts now being received into the Church each year in this Diocese.

Priests of the Diocese also describe the personal interest the eminent prelate took in their parish problems and achievements. Seemingly insignificant details won his attention and encouragement and he had the faculty of remembering the individual hobbies and favorite topics of the priests.

It is little wonder that his fellow bishops elected him to their Administrative Board of the National Catholic Welfare Conference and named him Chairman of the Conference's Department of Social Action. A year later, in 1935, they elected him chairman of this Administrative Board, a post he held for ten years.

In Detroit, Archbishop Mooney continued to display the same capable leadership he had shown so clearly in Rochester. Again Rome took notice and within ten years he was called to Rome to receive the Red Hat, symbol of the Cardinal's rank. Today the Rochester Diocese takes justifiable pride in the fact that its fourth Bishop is now honored as a Prince of the Catholic Church.

The day Archbishop Mooney was installed as the first Archbishop of Detroit (August 3, 1937), word came from Rome that Bishop Fahey had been named to succeed him at Rochester. The fifth Bishop of Rochester realized he would have to stride as a giant to keep pace with his predecessors. Little wonder that his first comment was to request humbly the prayers of his people to be a "worthy successor" of such outstanding bishops. Today, twenty years later, the panorama of his accomplishments is eloquent evidence that God has heard and granted those prayers.