

'Tale Of Two Cities'

(Continued from page 89)

of St. Andrew's Seminary and Monsignor John E. Maney, pastor of Corpus Christi Church and then Secretary to Bishop Kearney, paid a passing visit to Rochester, about 30 miles from London, during a vacation tour in England.

The pastor of nearby Chatham, Father Thomas O'Riordan, showed them around and pointed out a piece of land in Rochester where he hoped some day to build a church and shrine for the great local saint. He explained that Holy Mass had never been celebrated in Rochester since Bishop Fisher's arrest and martyrdom over 400 years before.

The building site was historic land called "Priestfields" where before the Reformation a college of secular priests had lived and assisted at Bishop Fisher's Cathedral of St. Andrew only three-quarters of a mile away. But the government would not grant Father O'Riordan a license to build nor permission to buy scarce building materials to erect the much-needed church.

So, the 1,000 Catholics in the area traveled to nearby Chatham for Sunday Mass and Christ remained an exile from Bishop Fisher's town.

Back home, Monsignor Lyons and Monsignor Maney told Bishop Kearney the story of historic, sleepy Rochester which had possessed no Catholic Church in 400 years. The Bishop wrote Father O'Riordan expressing lively interest in his hopes for a church building and pledging the financial cooperation of the American Diocese when the Ministry of Works granted priority for construction.

In the Spring of 1952 license to begin partial construction was granted by the government. Father O'Riordan, having only 20 per cent of the estimated cost of \$75,000, remembered Bishop Kearney's pledge and wrote him about the small but consoiling beginning they intended to make. Father O'Riordan told that Bishop Cawdery of Southwark in whose diocese the ancient sees of Rochester and Canterbury now he would lay the corner stone on July 6 even though the building might not be finished for some years. Financial and government policies permitted.

Bishop Kearney's letter of appeal to priests and people on June 1st



GOVERNOR HARRIMAN

was so immediately successful that with the assurance of \$30,000 of American cash to back construction the British government in London authorized Father O'Riordan and Bishop Cawdery to proceed to erect the full church.

BISHOP CAWDERY had told his people about the "miraculous gift of 30,000 dollars" declared "But for this and we were here again by our American brethren it would not have been possible for a very long time to erect a church in the ancient Rochester and certainly not a church of such nobility, of design and beauty as we hope this will be.

The red brick romance of the new to seat 350 rose slowly and steadily over looking the ancient ruins of the confiscated Cathedral of the city.

typed Bishop. Finally on May 2, 1954, some 2,500 British Catholics attended the first Mass in 400 years in old world Rochester in the new St. John Fisher Church.

Governor's Message

STATE OF NEW YORK
EXECUTIVE CHAMBER
ALBANY

AVERELL HARRIMAN
GOVERNOR

October 4, 1957

Dear Bishop Kearney:

I send you cordial greetings and congratulations as you celebrate the silver jubilee of your Episcopal Consecration and your twentieth year as Bishop of Rochester.

Rochester is the richer for the inspiration you have given to its spiritual life, and for the leadership you have provided in civic affairs, particularly in the field of education.

You have my every best wish for continued success in the years ahead. God speed your good work.

Sincerely,

Averell Harriman

The Most Reverend James E. Kearney, D.D.
Bishop of Rochester

Bishop Kearney who had been scheduled to celebrate the first Mass in the new church while returning from his ad limina visit to Rome was prevented by illness from making the trip. But twenty Americans from his Diocese shared the celebration.

A truly magnificent procession of 100 diocesan clergy escorted Bishop Cawdery to the church in a double-decker bus. The first Mass celebrated in the new church was the first since the late Bishop Kearney's death.

MORE THAN 200 people gathered to witness the first Mass outside the church in 400 years. The first Mass was celebrated in the new church on July 6, 1954.

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Bishop Kearney welcomed Bishop Cyril Cawdery (right in photo) of Southwark, England during latter's 1955 tour of the United States. The British Bishop stopped in Rochester to thank Bishop Kearney and Catholics of the Rochester Diocese for their \$30,000 gift which made possible the erection of the new memorial church for St. John Fisher in Rochester, England, the ancient See City of the Cardinal Martyr. Rochester, England is now part of Bishop Cawdery's Southwark Diocese.