



Students pray in St. Bernard's chapel.



Bishop Kearney ordains new priests.

## This Is 'Finest Chapter In Our History'

Bishop Kearney has ordained 200 priests for service in Diocese of Rochester, and given devoted care to training of students in St. Andrew's, St. Bernard's Seminaries

By MONSIGNOR WILFRED T. CRAUGH, Rector of St. Bernard's Seminary

*"The founding and development of the program of the diocesan seminaries — St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's — is the finest chapter in the history of our Diocese, and your generosity has made that chapter possible, your own generosity and the generosity of your fathers and forebears through the years."*

—Bishop Kearney to his people

NOT LEAST among those rejoicing with Bishop Kearney in the observance of his episcopal jubilee are students of his seminaries, young men looking forward expectantly to the day when they will share in the priesthood, which their Bishop has enjoyed in its fullness for twenty-five years.

His Excellency has many reasons for gratitude to God in these happy days. One might think that chief among them is the fact that he has been raised to the exalted rank of the episcopate, of that it has been his good fortune to have served twenty of his twenty-five years as Bishop of Rochester, where he has received so many testimonials of the affection and loyalty of a people always ready to lend full cooperation in any project it has been his duty to design.

Yet, those who know Bishop Kearney intimately, as do his priests and seminarians, know that for him something more fundamental is the object of his gratitude, and that the prayer of thanksgiving on his lips today is simply: I thank God for having called me to be a priest.

It is this consciousness of the dignity and importance of the priesthood that has inspired Bishop Kearney's constant interest in the welfare of the seminaries under his care — St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's.

Everyone knows that there are countless demands upon a Bishop's attention: churches, schools, hospitals, agencies of social welfare, with their endless variety of problems, but, important and necessary as all of these are, it has been the constant admiration of the Supreme Pontiffs to Bishops throughout the world that none is more important than the seminary.

In the administration of your dioceses, Leo XIII wrote to the Bishops, "there is nothing that calls for more solicitude and care than your seminaries, upon which rests your very hope for the spiritual progress and salvation of the souls for which you must one day render an account."

In keeping with that admonition Bishop Kearney has spared no possible effort to secure for a work so important to the life of the Church an adequate supply of properly trained priests. His annual appeal for the means necessary to maintain the two seminaries is always met with a generosity unparalleled.

On the occasion of the diamond jubilee of St. Andrew Seminary in 1945, recognizing the necessity of more adequate accommodations to meet the increasing needs of the seminary, Bishop Kearney, with characteristic confidence in the generosity and good will of his people, announced a campaign to raise five hundred thousand dollars for a new seminary.

At the end of the campaign in February, 1946, the more than six thousand solicitors throughout the Diocese were able to report a total of \$856,000 pledged. Construction was soon underway, and today the new St. Andrew's Seminary stands as one of the proudest features in Bishop Kearney's record of achievement in his years in the Diocese of Rochester.

THE BISHOP of Rochester has not been concerned only with the material welfare of his seminarians. His most important concern always has been with the formation of their minds and hearts for their future work as priests. His visits to the seminaries have never been surrounded with the formality of a stern superior among his subjects, but rather that of a father happy in the company of his spiritual children.

In his conferences he has shared with them the fruits of his own pastoral, priestly life, exhorting them to be ever faithful to their high vocation, and above all, dwelling upon the priestly virtues which they in turn must exemplify in their lives as ministers of the things of God among men.

The Holy Mass and the Eucharist are the subjects of which the Bishop never tires of speaking. The seminarians, as the priests in their annual retreat, know well the source of their Bishop's spiritual strength and inspiration from his repeated exhortations that they make the Holy Sacrifice the center of their priestly life and work.

It was Bishop Kearney's desire to share to some extent his responsibility for the formation of priestly characters in his seminarians that prompted him to organize the St. Monica Society for the mothers of priests and seminarians. A crowded schedule seldom prevents him from his monthly appointments to celebrate Mass for them on the First Friday in thanksgiving for the vocations with which their Christian homes have been blessed, and to beg for the same blessing upon other homes.

GRAVE AS ARE the responsibilities of the Bishop who has a seminary under his care, there are also compensations which he finds in the exercise of no other episcopal prerogative.

Step by step he follows the seminarians through the lower Orders until finally it is his thrilling privilege to impose his hands upon them in ordination, passing on to them the powers of the priesthood, continuing the unbroken line of succession from the time of the Apostles.

There are today over seven hundred priests in various dioceses, all graduates of St. Bernard's Seminary, who have received Holy Orders through Bishop Kearney's hands, and in our own Diocese nearly two hundred priests who were ordained to the priesthood by him. A Bishop may well be proud of the material expansion of his diocese as the fruit of his efforts and labor, but this is not to be compared with effects of his role as an ordaining High Priest.

The grace and power that flow through his hands into souls of the priests he ordains reach out through them to affect for eternity the lives of hundreds of thousands of the faithful. He is the instrument that enables the work of Christ to continue in the world today.

Priests, who have already reached their goal, know well the joys of the priesthood, and can fully appreciate the happiness and gratitude that fills the heart of their Bishop on this happy anniversary.

The seminarians, too, grateful for the example and guidance they have received from him, unite in prayer that God will preserve him until the day when it shall be their happiness to kneel before him and by him be received into the ranks of the priesthood.