

# 'I Know Mine And Mine Know Me'

Bishop Kearney's insistence on joining religion with modern technical competence provides topflight diocesan organization in field of charitable and welfare care

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THE KEYNOTE of Bishop Kearney's leadership of Catholic Charities was struck in an address he made to the campaign work of the Rochester Community Chest in May 1951. On that occasion he epitomized his social philosophy when he said:

"Charity is a virtue. Social work is a method. Charity is an act of religion. Social work is an adaptation of science. Charity is a virtue that applies to all men and women, regardless of race, color, creed or neighborhood. A view to the latter's temporal and material well-being is not the purpose of charity. Charity is an act of religion and administrative efficiency for the purpose of eliminating or correcting social problems.

"Charity is a virtue of the spirit. The Bishop's social work is the thing of the spirit. Its distinction is not in social work in opposition to charity. It is a difference not contradictory. No one would think of declaring that the profession of medicine is a science with the virtue of charity. Yet medicine deals with sickness and a charitable spirit rather than a spirit of charity.

"The methods and means of science," the Bishop said, "may be applied to the practice of Christian charity. But charity may be deduced from its reality and sanctity as a virtue. In fact, the object of the virtue of charity requires that it be exercised with profound intelligence and effort. It is not only a private virtue but a social philosophy. It alone requires a considerable principle of charity as a condition of social stability.

This is what Bishop Kearney has done. He has taken the virtue of charity with the best technical competence and has achieved results passed upon by the state in the welfare agencies under his supervision. This was most important at the time, because his administration of the Rochester Diocese began in 1937, in the waning days of the depression. Welfare programs born of the desperation of those times were becoming more and more dependent upon the state.

Bishop Kearney was keenly aware of this trend and his voice was raised many times in warning:

"Nothing in these matters should be attempted by the state which can be done by individuals, or by industrial managements cooperating with labor, or by voluntary associations of charity. Conversely, anything affecting the common good should be taken up by the state, if proven that that thing cannot be done by a voluntary agent. To this, we should perhaps add that if voluntary agents are able but unwilling, it will then be time enough for the state to consider the matter."

BISHOP KEARNEY saw to it that the voluntary agencies under his auspices were not only willing but able to meet their responsibilities. He began early in his administration to strengthen the work of the Charities of the Diocese of Rochester.

He inaugurated a program of advanced training for the priests assigned to direct the diocesan Charities. He knew that the ideals and standards of care thus acquired would become the ideals and standards of all workers of Catholic Charities. Today, as a result, the staff of Catholic Charities, both laymen and Sisters, is one of the finest in this country.

A casual glance at the statistics will bear this out. In 1937 less than 1200 families were cared for by Catholic Charities. In 1957 over 2500 families are receiving help through this agency. Six times as many children

are being adopted this year as there were in 1937.

In 1938 Bishop Kearney embarked on a program of improving the foster care of children. He recognized the place of the boarding home in the care of the neglected, dependent child and began to prepare for the amalgamation of three children institutions: St. Mary's Boys Home, St. Patrick's Girls Home, St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum into St. Joseph's Villa. With the increase in the number of children cared for in boarding homes increased skill of staff, advent of Social Security programs, a smaller institution was advisable.

ST JOSEPH'S VILLA, a cottage-type institution built at the cost of \$348,000, was dedicated by Bishop Kearney in July, 1942. The Catholics of the Diocese can take justifiable pride in the Villa. It is one of the most carefully conceived and wisely planned institutions of its kind in the world.

At this time Bishop Kearney, in order to have a balanced program of child care, both institutional and boarding home, also did much to promote the interest of Catholic mothers and fathers in opening their homes to foster children. He established the Holy Family Guild of Catholic foster parents. On occasion he personally greeted and thanked hundreds of Catholic foster-parents for their contribution to the well-being of Catholic foster children.

The boast of the Good Shepherd can be said of Bishop Kearney, "I know mine and mine know me." In his twenty years, the Catholic Family Center, in addition to its family work has cared for over 6,000 gifted foster children.

The Bishop of a diocese is not a remote leader content to lay down broad general policies; he must also be an inspiration to the efforts of religion in many varied fields. Bishop Kearney, as president of the diocesan boards of the Charities and the various agencies and institutions affiliated with the Charities, has been intimately involved in every advance made during the past twenty years. Because of his personal experience with the works of charity he has sought to spread the benefits of charity in his whole Diocese. In 1946 he welcomed Catholic Family Service of Empira into the diocesan Charities set-up.

In 1954 he provided the funds for the establishment of the Catholic Family Center of Auburn and Cayuga County. Now the largest centers of population in the Diocese are served by local agencies of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rochester.

Bishop Kearney has presided at monthly meetings of the Board of Trustees of the Catholic Charities whose corporate consent has approved over 700 adoptions during the past two decades. Under his guidance St. Ann's Home expanded its capacity to care for an increasing number of older persons. The financial condition of this institution has been made secure, so that it can with confidence discharge an even larger share of its responsibility to those on the threshold of Eternity.

OVER THE YEARS, the Bishop of Rochester has taken a personal interest in the management of St. Elizabeth's Guild House for young women working in lower income jobs. Over a thousand different young women have known the Christian warmth and protection of this Rochester home.

We would not have this valuable institution today were it not for Bishop Kearney's fatherly solicitude



Palm Sunday Mass for newly arrived Puerto Ricans in Chapel of the Columbus Civic Center.

for these young women. In the early days of his administration of the Diocese, St. Elizabeth Guild House became such a financial liability that thought was given to its discontinuance. To meet this problem he helped establish a Guild of women who have helped carry and then pay off the debt of this home.

Bishop Kearney has not only been a shepherd to his own flock, but he has been an active leader in promoting the community's welfare. Through his example Catholics have become more conscious of their responsibility to the community as a whole. Bishop Kearney has made his fellow Catholics throughout the Diocese keenly aware of the Community Chest and Red Cross. He has served on the board of Trustees of the Rochester Community Chest and has done much to strengthen this institution as one of the finest expressions of community cooperation found anywhere.

The most powerful spiritual means at his disposal, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass has been used by him to emphasize to his fellow citizens the religious significance of charity in the Community Chest. He has given generously of his time and means to promote, strengthen and support the Community Chest movement not only here in Rochester but also in the other cities throughout the Diocese.

THE CHAOTIC aftermath of World War II and Communist tyranny left millions not only homeless, but also country-less. Mindful that his Master

Christ was once such a refugee, Bishop Kearney opened the resources of his Diocese to help settle over 4,000 displaced persons in his Diocese. This was the first contribution to establish a fund so that gallant Hungarian freedom fighters could find a home in our midst.

Ever since his first public appearance in this Diocese, which took place at the closing campaign dinner of the Catholic Youth Organization in 1937, Bishop Kearney, the educator, has been keenly interested in the constructive use of leisure time by the youngsters of the Diocese. The C. Y. O. alone has seen a twenty-fold increase of children using its program. Here again while numbers may be important, the quality of service ever emphasized by our Bishop has been paramount in the operation of the C. Y. O.

His personal interest in the Scouting program is exemplified by the "Bishop's Lay Committee on Scouting," his means of bringing this program to practically every corner of his Diocese.

The people of the Diocese of Rochester, appreciative of Bishop Kearney's leadership in the field of charity, made it possible for him to accomplish these great things by their loyal and generous support — a support that has totalled the magnificent sum of \$13,000,000 during twenty years.

Looking back over the twenty years of our Bishop's activities in the field of Charity, we see reflected in his zeal and accomplishments also the dynamic vitality of our Catholic Faith applied to the needs of the 20th century.