

Religious Orders—'Serving God And Saving Souls'

The Bishop of Rochester has welcomed 16 religious communities of men and women to take up the apostolate of 'serving God and saving souls' in his 12-county Diocese

By FATHER HENRY ATWELL, Assistant Editor of the Catholic Courier - Journal

HOLY SCRIPTURE records the words of three awestruck disciples who gazed at their transfigured Master atop Mount Thabor 1800 years ago.

"It is good for us to be here," they said to Jesus.

Borrowing the phraseology from a recent book by the gospel writer Matthew, the Bishop of Rochester told Trappist monks in their state chapel at Piffard. "It is good for us to be here."

The realization that a bishop needs monks and cloistered nuns to pray for his Diocese has spurred Bishop James F. Kearney to welcome new religious orders and to bolster the influence of the already established ones.

He has stressed the value of religious life in the Diocese of Rochester, which he has described as a "Diocese of prayer." He has urged the clergy to create a new "spiritual life" in the Diocese, and has called for a "double movement" of prayer and saving souls.

At a 1957 convention, a reception center in Elmira, the Bishop emphasized the Church's general apostolate. "Diocese is particularly needed," he said, "to create a 'double movement' and to offer to the people the apostolate of 'Saving Souls'."

"We need some people who will make the love of God a specialty," the Bishop said. "We need those who will pray for us who are too busy to pray for ourselves, or who are neglected in practical state."

With EQUAL emphasis on progress in saving souls, the religious communities "have met the challenge of the problems of each generation," youth, education, and social justice, he said. "I have been successful," he wrote his episcopal letter to the Sisters of Mercy, "because they are loyal three years ago and know how many souls are saved. His presence has been a source of inspiration and efforts of these communities."

It is no wonder, therefore, that the religious communities new to the Diocese of Rochester since Bishop Kearney's coming here in 1947 represent a variety of vocations, ranging from the height of a Trappist monk at Piffard to the energetic Missionary Helpers of the Sacred Heart Sisters serving Christ's kindness and truth to the remote corners of Tompkins County.

Sixteen of the thirty-six religious communities of priests and nuns now working in the Rochester Diocese have come at the invitation of Bishop Kearney. The others, previously established here, have steadily developed in spirit and numbers under his blessing and encouragement.

Eight of the new religious communities are orders of priests, eight, sisters.

Canon priests in Auburn, Franciscans in Watkins Glen, and Jesuits in Rochester staff high schools for boys in these areas.

Trappists at Piffard, Benedictines near Elmira are secluded in remote monasteries for prayer and manual work.

Capuchins at Interlaken and Genesee, and Atonement friars at Montour Falls conduct training centers for their own orders.

Most of the communities of priests assist nearby parish priests for Saturday night confessions, Sunday morning Masses and other special services.



Bishop Kearney welcomes Jesuits to Diocese

Dominican nuns in Elmira are dedicated to perpetual recitation of the Rosary taking turns in chapel to keep up an unceasing chorus of petition at the throne of God.

The Religious of the Cenacle Nuns conduct a retreat house for women on East Ave., Rochester, though they

themselves never leave the cloister of their convent.

Other communities of nuns brought to Rochester under Bishop Kearney's direction are engaged in instruction or domestic work.

These include the Institute of the

Blessed Virgin at St. Bernard's Seminary, Rochester; Mission Helpers of the Sacred Heart in Ithaca and Fairport; Religious of Jesus and Mary, St. Francis of Assisi parish, Auburn; Third Order Franciscan Sisters, Conesus; Sister Servants of Mary

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The Priests and Parishioners
of
St. John the Evangelist
Greece, New York

Respectfully Greet
His Excellency
Bishop Kearney
on the happy occasion
of his
Silver Jubilee

