

Your Devoted Shepherd In Christ'

The readiness of the Bishop of Rochester to support efforts of Catholic laity revealed in his gift of 'personal touch' and desire to be close to his people

By ROBERT SMETT, Catholic Courier-Journal Staff

BISHOP KEARNEY has never lost his "personal touch." Despite his taxing duties and problems involved in the spiritual leadership of over 300,000 Catholics, the Bishop of Rochester is a man close to his people.

In the most formal functions, we reach out from the processional to pat the head of some young child, the sideline, smile and nod to an elderly lady, stop by the chair with some special word.

Dear to all Catholics of the Rochester Diocese is the phrase, "Devoted Shepherd In Christ." It adorns all official letters from the Bishop of Rochester to the clergy and laity.

He is always conscious of the twofold duty of the Shepherd, the obligation both to lead and protect his flock.

Since his coming to Rochester 27 years ago, Bishop Kearney has greeted each new year with his people. His traditional New Year's "at home" at his episcopal residence at 97 East Avenue finds him in the role of father, greeting his children, wishing them a happy new year.

His desire to know his people personally, to know their problems and to help them, has led the faithful of the Diocese to refer to him not as "the Bishop," but "our" Bishop.

A sign of his generous and warm heart to the layman is a story of Bishop's visit to an outlying community to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation.

While leaving the church, the Bishop, in customary turned to left and raised his hand in blessing. A man in the congregation mistook the Bishop's Sign of the Cross as a gesture of greeting and waved back at the Bishop, understanding the mistake and obviously fearing the man might be embarrassed, stopped the procession and eagerly shook hands with the man.

Each year the Bishop gives at home what he calls a "family" Christmas dinner for the employees of the many diocesan offices and bureaus and, as a personal gift, gives all of his workers an extra holiday.

Although received with joy by the office worker, many an office "boss" is given a momentary frown of disapproval to this disruption of routine, but the Bishop knows his people, and how to please them.

The "holiday" is one of the Bishop's favorite gifts as many a youngster in the Diocesan schools knows. It is Bishop Kearney's habit to give a free day when he makes his annual Christmas visits to the Catholic high schools.

When ground was broken for McQuaid Jesuit High School in September 1954, Bishop Kearney appointed St. Francis Xavier as the school's special patron saint, adding in his address that the saint's feastday in December would thereafter be a holiday for McQuaid students.

In speaking to the crowd gathered for the groundbreaking rites, Monsignor Charles Mahoney, then superintendent of Diocesan schools, remarked that it was typical of Bishop Kearney "to be giving holidays even before the school is built."

As Bishop, the bridge between God and his flock, he has given his unflinching support and encouragement to every activity that would bring his people closer to God.

THIS SAME ZEAL for the happiness of his people, young and old, is noted in Bishop Kearney's unstinting work for the spiritual welfare of his people.

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Christmas visitors sing carols at Bishop's house.

Soon after his arrival in the Diocese, Bishop Kearney formed the Rochester Police Holy Name Society and addressed the members at their first Communion Breakfast. It is not only the policemen's duty to enforce the law, but also to set a good moral example in his own life for his fellow-citizens, the Bishop told the group.

On the Feast of the Holy Family in 1940, Bishop Kearney instituted the annual, diocesan-wide practice of Family Communion, and "making mother 'Queen for a Day,'" with breakfast at a restaurant.

In the same year, he officiated at the first affiliation ceremony of the

Ladies of Charity in Elmira.

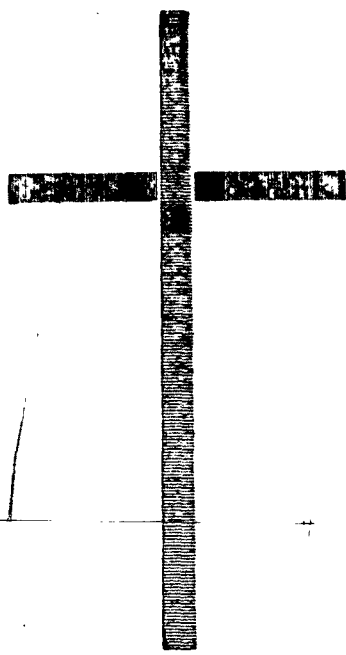
On its 50th anniversary, he lauded the many achievements of the Rochester Advisory Senate of the Ladies' Catholic Benevolent Association.

His great personal devotion to Our

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Members of the Police Holy Name Society
comprised of officers attached to:

- ROCHESTER POLICE DEPARTMENT
- MONROE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
- GREECE POLICE DEPARTMENT
- IRONDEQUOIT POLICE DEPARTMENT
- WEBSTER POLICE DEPARTMENT
- FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
(Rochester Office)
- NEW YORK STATE POLICE



Offer their Sincere Congratulations
to Bishop James E. Kearney on
the occasion of his Silver Jubilee

THE POLICE HOLY NAME SOCIETY
of Rochester and Monroe County