



HOLY NAME RALLY — Bishop Kearney honors 42 diocesan priests serving as chaplains with Armed Forces in World War II.

## Bishop Of Rochester—Silver Jubilarian

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copy. It was strange," the Bishop adds, "that a man of such scholarly habits threw himself so vigorously into the fierce activities of World War I. But knowing the man so well, I know how he reconciled his philosophy with this great adventure."

FATHER KEARNEY was ordained to the priesthood on September 19, 1906, by Bishop Thomas F. Cusack, Auxiliary of New York, in St. Stephen's Church. Following his ordination he went to the Catholic University of America in Washington for a year of postgraduate study.

His first pastoral assignment was in New York City as assistant curate of St. Cecilia's Church. Here he spent his first busy and zealous years. During some of these years at St. Cecilia's he also lectured at our Lady of Good Counsel College at White Plains, and served as superintendent of Catholic schools in the Bronx.

In one sense Bishop Kearney has never left St. Cecilia's, the happy scene of his early priestly career. Even today part of his heart is in the old parish. He likes to return for a visit to St. Cecilia's and tell stories of his former altar boys who are now pursuing successful careers.

In July 1928 Cardinal Hayes appointed Father Kearney to found the new parish of St. Francis Xavier in the Bronx. As a Bishop he has many times sent young priests out to start new parishes and his own experience at St. Francis Xavier has made him very appreciative and understanding of the problems involved in such an undertaking.

In his own case, Father Kearney had no time in organizing his first parish. Shortly after his appointment he gathered a few hundred parishioners in the old Woodmont Inn to celebrate the first Mass in the new parish of St. Francis Xavier. By September he had secured a rectory where he used the altar for daily Mass and devotions. He could establish a parish church. On December 2, 1928 Father Kearney celebrated the first Mass in the new Church of St. Francis Xavier, a portable frame structure costing \$11,000.

These were busy years for Father Kearney. Within a year he was able to open a new parish auditorium. In fall of 1930 he organized the parish school with the first grade for

St. Francis Xavier. Since coming to Rochester he has returned to St. Francis Xavier to lay the cornerstone for its present school (June 1937) and to deliver the dedicatory sermon for the new parish church (August 1951).

DESPIITE HIS ambitions for his new parish Father Kearney was not destined to stay very long at St. Francis Xavier. God had other plans for him. After only four years, as he tells it, "my baby church was taken from me, and handed over to the tender care of another pastor."

This resulted from Father Kearney's appointment as Bishop of Salt Lake City, Utah, on July 4, 1932. His consecration by Cardinal Hayes took place October 28, 1932 in New York's St. Patrick's Cathedral. The day of Bishop Kearney's episcopal consecration (October 28, 1932) was his own birthday, his mother's birthday, and the anniversary of the consecration of Cardinal Hayes.

The new Bishop found the See of Salt Lake City, one of the mission dioceses of the far west, extensive in territory but small in the numbers of its faithful. The entire diocese included 10,000 Catholics, 33 priests, and 19 churches.

With meager funds, bolstered by his own tireless energy, Bishop Kearney tackled the problem of developing churches, schools, and other progressive programs for the diocese. Since the parishes in the traditional Mormon stronghold of Utah were too poor to support most of their priests, Bishop Kearney, during his years at Salt Lake, made their support one of his personal responsibilities. He did this through appeals for mission collections in the churches of New York City.

As head of the Salt Lake City Diocese Bishop Kearney came to know the Mormons very well. "They're good people the Mormons," he recalls, "decent to live with and good neighbors. I respect the profundity of their faith and profoundly disbelieve it. I believe they are wrong and I know we are right."

This sincerity and forthrightness soon won for Bishop Kearney the respect and friendship of the people of Utah, the Mormons as well as the others. Among his friends was the governor at the time, George H. Blood, who readily admitted that he knew he "could always get advice and help from Bishop Kearney."

AFTER FIVE YEARS in Utah a new chapter in the life of Bishop Kearney unfolded. This began while he was in Detroit during the summer of 1937 (Aug. 3) for the installation of Archbishop Edward Mooney, as Archbishop of Detroit. Archbishop Mooney, now Cardinal Mooney, had been transferred to Detroit from the Diocese of Rochester. With prelates gathered in Detroit from all parts of the country word came from Rome that Bishop Kearney had been appointed to the See of Rochester as Archbishop Mooney's successor.

Asked by the press for a statement, the new Bishop of Rochester said: "I am very delighted with my appointment, with the honor and the confidence manifested by the Holy See."

"My only hope," he added, "is to be the worthy successor of the outstanding prelates who have conferred such honor on the See. To that end I humbly solicit the prayers of the priests, the religious, and my good people of the See of Rochester."

This prayerful hope of following in the footsteps of his predecessors has been more than fulfilled. Bishop Kearney's record stands for God and man to see.

WHEN HE FIRST came to Rochester, he arrived a stranger and unknown. Today a host of spiritual followers hail him as their beloved Shepherd and his name is a byword throughout the Diocese.

When he came in 1937 the Diocese embraced 230,000 Catholics. Today it includes over 350,000. Then there were 72 parish schools. Today there are 93. Then there were 27,780 pupils in parish schools and diocesan high schools. Today there are 50,000 students enrolled in diocesan and parish schools. Then there were five secondary (high) schools. Now there are 17.

Add to this picture the construction of a new seminary, two colleges and expansion of the hospital system as well as the establishment of a score of religious houses and we have an impressive outline of the achievements of Bishop Kearney during his 20 busy years in Rochester.

His own zeal and the growing importance of the Diocese has been recognized at least twice during recent years by the Holy Father himself. To assist Bishop Kearney in administering the ever increasing dut-

les of his office and at his own request, Pope Pius XII, in 1953, named the Bishop's former secretary, Monsignor Lawrence B. Casey, to the post of Auxiliary Bishop.

Again, in 1955, the Pontiff conferred on Bishop Kearney the title of "Bishop Assistant at the Pontifical Throne." This honor, which makes him a member of the Papal Court and provides him a place of honor at the throne of the Holy Father during Papal functions, is conferred on Bishops of "outstanding merit in the Church" and on those who are recognized for their "zeal in fulfilling the episcopal office."

This his year of Silver Jubilee in the episcopacy, finds the 73-year-old head of the Diocese still the busy and energetic prelate who, when he stepped off the train 20 years ago in Rochester, said in effect, "I hope I can do a good job here."

Daily he is seen coming and going at his East Avenue residence, popularly styled by his clergy as "947". Or he can be found at his Chancery Office (50 Chestnut Street in the Diocesan Building) where he dispatches voluminous duties of business and correspondence, writing rapidly in his own hand and with a simple straight pen.

More familiar to all, of course, is the sight of the Bishop, accompanied by his secretary Father Edward McAniff, riding in his black automobile (bearing the license plate, M-947) and on his way to fulfill official engagements — engagements which take him up and down the length and breadth of the Diocese.

Through his continuous schedule of appearances, week after week, Bishop Kearney keeps up-to-date an intimate and first hand knowledge of church life in his 12-county jurisdiction which includes such picturesque upstate areas as the Genesee Valley, the Finger Lakes and the Chemung Valley.

"He has been good for us." This is the simple tribute which today falls from the lips of thousands throughout the Diocese of Rochester. More eloquent tributes may come to the Jubilarian Bishop but none will be more sincere and meaningful. Thousands, grateful for the spiritual guidance and vision which he has given them, will bless Bishop Kearney's day of jubilee with this silent prayer: "Lord, he has been good for us . . . Lord he is good for us . . . Bless him and keep him!"

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