

DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER THE SEE CITY



To Bishop Fulton J. Sheen:

Rochester has traditionally embraced its spiritual leaders. It will do so again when, on December 15, 1966, the See City and the whole twelve county diocese opens its heart and its arms to you, Bishop Sheen.

We wish to add our warmest welcome to that of the entire community, Bishop Sheen. The excitement of your coming at a moment of such great promise for the spiritual life of our communities makes us humbly and prayerfully solicit the blessings of Almighty God upon your Episcopal Reign in the Diocese of Rochester.

Ad Multos Annos!

 CHRISTOPHER PRESS, INC.
35 SCIO STREET • ROCHESTER, NEW YORK



Bishop Sheen once assisted Pope John in consecrating bishops for mission dioceses.

A Lonesome Stranger Finds a Friend in Bishop Sheen

By PAUL SCOTT

It was a Halloween night. The weather was raw and blustery and the rain stung my face as I walked the deserted New York streets. I always walked at night so I would not be seen. For I had been disfigured by leprosy.

Not long before I had been released from the government hospital at Carville, La. After six nightmare years I was cured of the dread disease. But I was only a shadow of the happy, active New York high school boy who loved girls and dancing and played halfback on the school football team. Now my face was scarred by surgery and I had lost most of the sight in one eye. I had loved the thrill of weaving through a broken field in football, or the exhilaration of spiraling a pass downfield. Now, despite 16 operations, my fingers were still twisted and awkward, and I walked with a limp.

My hopes of returning to a normal life with my family and friends were quickly shattered by people's reaction to my appearance. When I went out in public, people stared and whispered. I was unable to get a job. My old friends gradually drifted away. The change in my appearance was too much even for my parents. They moved to another city while I remained in New York, alone and friendless.

Finally a kindly man gave me a job as a clerk in a small office and I took a room at the YMCA. I avoided going out in public whenever I could except at night. I would wander along deserted beaches on weekends, or through the empty streets of New York late at night when few people were about. I was aimlessly walking the streets on a rainy Halloween night when I encountered a group of children playing "trick or treat." They were wearing masks and motley Halloween costumes. "Look at him," one of them exclaimed. "He doesn't need a mask."

The name Paul Scott is, for obvious reasons, a pseudonym.

Those few childish words were what finally broke my spirit. I walked away in the darkness, numb with despair. Walking blindly I found myself passing St. Patrick's Cathedral. Although not a Catholic, I went in, seeking to compose myself. Kneeling despairingly in the dimly lighted interior, I suddenly thought of Bishop Fulton Sheen. While at Carville I had learned of his work with leprosy sufferers around the world. Perhaps, I thought, if I could talk to him he could help me. Seeing a priest I approached and asked if I could see Bishop Sheen. The priest explained that Bishop

Sheen was not connected with the cathedral. "If you'll leave your name I'll try to get it to him," he said. Disheartened, I mumbled my name and phone number and walked out into the night. It was just one more rebuff, I felt.

Not long afterwards I received a phone call from Bishop Sheen's office. The Bishop had heard I was trying to reach him, the secretary said, and would like me to come to his office. As I entered his office, in a New York business building, he came quickly from behind his desk to greet me. He wore a long black cassock with a wooden

cross dangling from a silver chain. Atop his gray hair was a red zucchetto. I watched his striking, deep-set eyes for the tell tale signs of shock I had come to expect on meeting strangers, but he smiled warmly and motioned me to a chair. Haltingly I told the story of my illness and disfigurement, of my abandonment by my friends and even my family. I said I had come to him, a stranger, because I had no one else to whom to turn.

"Well, you have at least one friend," he said. "Would you have dinner with me tomorrow night?"

The following night, over dinner at his residence, I told Bishop Sheen in full the details of my illness and the loneliness it had caused me. When I had talked myself out, he began to speak. Patiently and with gentle kindness he told me that my only salvation was to endure my misfortune with courage. "All of us suffer sometime in life," he said, "and those that bear their suffering with fortitude are strengthened by it."

Although he urged me to face my problem with courage, Bishop Sheen did not minimize the difficulty of my situation. "You will never have many friends," he said at that first dinner.

"I've found that out," I said.

"But those you do have," he added, "will be true friends."

The first of those true friends was Bishop Sheen. Although there were a thousand demands on his time, he was never too busy to see me. About once a week I would go to his residence for dinner. Because it was difficult for me to use my hands, he would cut my meat for me. He helped me to find a small apartment and then furnished it for me. He bought clothes for me and whenever he appeared on television he invited me to sit in the audience and introduced me to his personal guests, frequently noted people. Afterwards he would have me driven home. Once he asked what I planned to have for dinner the next day. I told him that I hadn't been paid yet and didn't have any food in the house. "Come with me," he said, impulsively. "We're going shopping." We walked to a nearby delicatessen. There he shopped with the exuberance of a child turned loose in a toy

—Continued on Page 11B

To the People of the Diocese . . .

Paul, Bishop and Servant of the Servants of God, to Our beloved children of the clergy and laity of the city and diocese of Rochester in America, greetings and Our apostolic blessing.

By reason of the transfer of Our venerable brother James Edward Kearney to the titular church of Tabaicara, you have been without a shepherd and father of your souls.

And therefore, by these Letters bearing our seal, We now inform you that again you have a Bishop, whom We have chosen today. With the advice of Our beloved son, the Holy Roman Church's Cardinal Pro-Prefect of the Sacred Consistorial Congregation, and in virtue of Our own supreme authority, We have named as the sacred Ruler of your diocese Our venerable brother Fulton John Sheen, until now Titular Bishop of Caesariana, a man renowned in every respect.

Now that We have made this fact known to you in the usual manner, We urge you, beloved children, not only to receive with joy this your new Bishop, who will fulfill the role of Christ himself in your midst, but also to support him in whatsoever projects he shall undertake, and be obedient to all the precepts and commands he shall consider to be for the good of your souls.

It is furthermore Our wish that the person who now has charge of your diocese will see to it that this Our Letter is published in the Cathedral Church on the first day of obligation after it has been received.