## The Diocese and the Five Giants Who Shaped It

'I am happy to be in a diocese so well directed for so many years'— Bishop Sheen

By FATHER HENRY A. ATWELL, Pastor, St. Agnes Church, Avon

When Bishop Fulton J. Sheen came to the Rochester Diocese in 1966 he was well aware that he had stepped into line behind a formidable procession of great shepherds.

Five Bishops before him had laid sturdy foundations already envied and imitated in other dioceses across the nation.

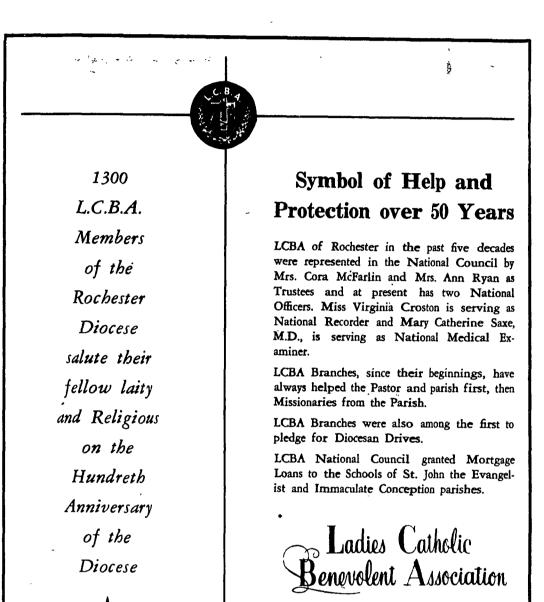
On the day of his appointment he said: "For 16 years I have worked officially for the missions, dealing with the circumterence of the world. Now I shall be happy to deal with a point within the circumference, in the pastoral work of caring for souls."

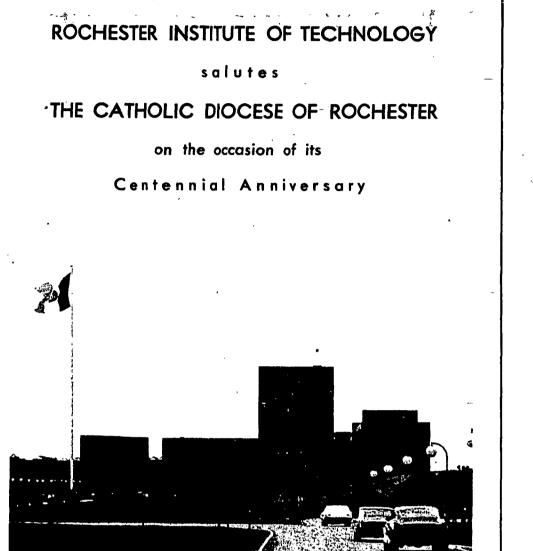


op in St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York, on July 12, 1868. Strain and physical exhauston at last forced him at the age of 81 to ask for an assistant bishop.

Rochester born Father Thomas F. Hickey, ordained by Bishop McQuaid in 1884 and later to be vicar general, was named to be Coadjutor Bishop with the right of succession.

Four years later, Bishop Mc-Quaid, keen and alert to the end looked out from his rectory sick room to the spire and snow shrouded roof of the venerable old St. Patrick's Cathedral at Platt and Plymouth Ave. Morning Mass had just ended. He praved one last prayer for the Poor Souls and the Mass next morning was offered for the repose of the soul of Rochester's first Bishop, He died Jan. 18, 1909 at 9 a.m.





Bishop Sheen added: "I an happy to go to a diocese so well directed for so many years by Bishop Kearney and his great predecessors."

These predecessors include the almost legendary Bishop Bernard I. McOuaid who virtually hewed the Diocese out of a frontier forest; Bishop, later Archbishop Thomas F. Hickey, noted for the expansion of Catholic education at the high school and college level during his episcopate; the beloved Bishop John Francis O'Hern Rochester. and his energetic but brief four years in which he had to face the crippling results of the de-' pression era; then finally the capable administrator and devout shepherd Archbishop, town. Cardinal Edward Mooney.

The story of these four prelates as they shaped the destiny standing success in establishing "Christian Free Schools." of the Rochester Diocese show the high ideal and difficult resolve Bishop James E. Kearney set for himself in determining to be a worthy successor to giants such as these when he came to this diocese in 1937 after five years as Bishop of Salt Lake City.

In the 29 years that followed, until at 81 he resigned at the request of Pope Paul VI and personally installed Bishop Sheen as his successor, diocesan history has been marked with imagination, inspiration, growth and success.

The story of Rochester's Bishops dates back to early 1868, the from attending. year the Diocese was established by Vatican decree.

op McQuaid organized the Sis-Pope Pius IX chose the vicar ters of St. Joseph and began the general of the fifteen-year-old present diocesan school system Courier-Journal Diocesan Centennial, Nov. 22, 1968 Page 10A

**Jnited States.** 

Bishop Bernard J. McQuaid, 1868 - 1909

diocese of Newark, Father Bernwith three nuns and 800 pupils. place to honor the faithful deard J. McQuaid, to head the

To support his first schools, newly established Diocese of Bishop McQuaid entered the lecture field, mounting pulpits and platforms to defend his Father McQuaid's appointthesis and appeal for the necesment in March, 1868, brought sary funds. Wherever he found him to Rochester when it was it at all possible Bishop Mcstill little more than a frontier Ouaid established parochial schools throughout the Diocese. Bishop McQuaid's name won As news of his work spread national recognition for his out-

throughout the country, educators from all over the nation came to study his accomplish-Today the Rochester diocesan

school system, built on the solid Bishop McQuaid was also far foundation laid by Bishop Mcin advance of his time in his Quaid, is still a model for the plan to build a clergy for the future. Most priests staffing parishes of his newly established With the backing of authori-Diocese had been educated and ties in Rome, Bishop McQuaid ordained in Europe. To bring revived in this country the polithe training of future priests cy of the Church for the educaunder his direct supervision, tion of children. Today's ac-Bishop McQuaid established cepted motto, "A Catholic child St. Andrew's Preparatory Semibelongs in a Catholic school," nary in 1870 and in 1891 laid was little known and less wanted in 1868. Catholic schools were the first stone for St. Bernard's then few and far between and Seminary.

most required payment of fees Bishop McQuaid also estabwhich prevented all but the rich lished Rochester's huge Catholic

cemetery, Holy Sepulchre. He To staff his free schools, Bishhad a two fold purpose in this action. First, of course, was his concern to provide a fitting

Rochester's second Bishop, Thomas F. Hickey, left monuments of brick and mortar that will endure and thrive as long as the Rochester Diocese exists.

Aquinas Institute, Mercy High School, Nazareth Academy and Nazareth College, Auburn's Mercy Hospital, Elmira's St. Joseph Hospital, and the

Motherhouse of the Sisters of parted. Bishop McQuaid's devo-St. Joseph are some of the outtion to the Poor Souls is legendstanding accomplishments of the ary and he insisted that Holy Rochester born prelate.

Sepulchre be beautifully laid He also pionecred in the "reout and embellished with trees, leased-time" program now esplants and shrubbery. The Gothtablished by law throughout ic chapel, a gem of architecture, New York State to provide religious instruction to public represents his personal and conschool pupils. This program perstant habit of saying Mass and mits public school pupils to atprayers for souls in Purgatory. tend Church sponsored classes at off-public-school-property for an A second objective of Bishop

hour each week. This system re-McQuaid in establishing the 400 spects the American principle of acre cemetery on Lake Ave. was separation between Church and to rid his Diocese of any last State. traces of the bitter nationalistic

divisions he had found at his ar-Bishop Hickey was one of the rival here. By bringing together first graduates of St. Andrew's at least in death all who called Seminary and after studies at themselves Catholic, Bishop Mc-St. Joseph's Provincial Seminary Quaid could point out the abat Troy knelt in St. Patrick's surdity of those who lived as if Cathedral, Rochester, to be orblood were more important than dained March 25, 1884, by the faith. His annual rite of blessing Bishop he would later succeed in graves was an effective means of office. uniting all the faithful in com-

After ordination, the then Famon prayer for the Poor Souls ther Hickey served as curate at who no longer counted their na-St. Francis de Sales Church, tional pride as of much conse-Geneva, and then as pastor of St. Patrick's at Moravia. In

Over thirty years as Bishop of 1895, he was appointed chaplain of the State Industrial School Rochester finally took their toll on Bishop McQuaid. He had located at that time at the prescome here at the age of 45, fresh ent Edgerton Park, Rochester. from his consecration as a bish-(Continued on Page 12A)

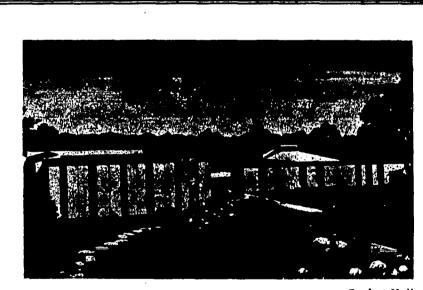
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