

The Diocese and the Five Giants Who Shaped It

(Continued from Page 17A)

headquarters at Graymoor now have a seminary at Montour Falls in the converted former Cook Academy. A high school and junior seminary are in charge of the Franciscan Fathers from Pulaski, Wis. in the former Glen Hotel at Watkins Glen. On the shores of Hemlock Lake is a novitiate of the Society of the Divine Word. The Carmelite Fathers have a novitiate at Whitefriars in Auburn.

Spiritual progress in the diocese has been xpaned in many forms. To a farm near Piffard have come the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance, better known as the Trappists, on Bishop Kearney's invitation to establish a Monastery. The Benedictine Fathers, also a contemplative order of prestige are now established near Elmira. The Capuchin Fathers conduct a Friary in Interlaken.

Need for closed retreats for the laity in the diocese was taken into consideration by the Bishop who directed the Redemptorist Fathers to establish the Notre Dame Diocesan Retreat House in Rochester following formative work in the move-

ment by the Redemptorists at Lake Seneca, Geneva.

This was followed by the establishment in Rochester of a Convent and Retreat House of the Religious of Our Lady of the Cenacle for retreats and other devotions by Catholic women. The Bishop has always given his full encouragement to the Carmelite Sisters, contemplative community in Rochester and to the Dominican Nuns of the Perpetual Rosary in Elmira.

Establishment of parishes and missions has brought the total number of parishes to 159 plus 35 other churches and chapels in the diocese. One chapel is worth special mention, the Chapel of St. John Bosco in the Elmira Reformatory, which was dedicated by Bishop Kearney, June 28, 1938 and became by that fact the first exclusively Catholic chapel in any American penal institution.

The practice of the corporal works of mercy in the Diocese since Bishop Kearney's arrival is testified to by two splendid institutions. The first is St. Joseph's Villa, a cottage-plan orphanage which was built to replace St. Mary's and St. Pat-

rick's Homes. The other is the new St. Mary's Hospital. It was opened in January 1945 to supplant the building which the Sisters of Charity had used for a hospital since 1865.

Continued growth marked other hospitals in the Diocese — Mercy Hospital in Auburn, St. Joseph's in Elmira and St. James Mercy in Hornell.

One of the major building projects of Bishop Kearney's stewardship was the erection on Portland Avenue of a new building for St. Ann's Home for the Aged — a nine-story structure with attached chapel, designed to accommodate 354 guests—100 more than the old building on Lake Avenue.

Among highlights of the 50s was the national Mission Scenarima which the Diocese hosted in 1955. It brought thousands of persons to Rochester's new War Memorial to view exhibits of missionary orders. By far the most popular guest speaker—his two lectures drew 20,000—was the national director for the Propagation of the Faith, Bishop Fulton J. Sheen.

By far the largest fund drive in diocesan history was in 1963

—a solicitation for new buildings to be constructed for Nazareth, St. John Fisher and the Diocese. The \$9 million goal was exceeded, with the final total announced at \$10,532,960.

It was at this time that a new plan emerged for the two diocesan seminaries — St. Bernard's major and St. Andrew's minor. Previously the seminarians six years of studies at each.

The new "4-4-4" plan provided for four years at St. Andrew's, four at St. John Fisher College and four at St. Bernard's. Seminarians taking courses at Fisher now reside at Becket Hall, adjoining the college campus.

Many diocesan organizations were born and gave yeoman service through Bishop Kearney's years. In 1957 the Bishop erected at Our Lady of Victory Church the Daily Mass League as "pious society." It now has thousands of members around the world. Progress also occurred in intensifying the Newman Apostolate in colleges throughout the Diocese.

The 1960s saw also a crisis in Catholic education, caused principally by fewer religious

vocations and rising school costs. One of the major answers to this problem was broader efforts in the field of catechetics, including establishment of catechetical centers in various parts of the Diocese.

For 13 years Bishop Kearney had the assistance of the first Auxiliary in the Diocese—Auxiliary Bishop Lawrence B. Casey. Consecrated May 5, 1953, he was announced as choice for Bishop of Paterson on Mar. 9, 1966.

Vatican II Council (1962-65) began the writing of a completely new chapter in church and diocesan history. Bishop Kearney and Bishop Casey represented the Diocese at the Council.

Diocesan Catholics, particularly in the cities, faced a new problem in the mid-60s — a more-than-average immigration of Negroes and Puerto Ricans, and so-called "inner city" deprivation. Bishop Kearney and the priests undertook many steps to meet these problems.

Not to be forgotten, also, was the "world mission" responsibility of the Church. During this time several volunteer priests

(Continued on Page 87A)

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(Continued from Page 86A)

and Sisters left the Diocese to labor in Bolivia, Brazil and Chile.

Complying with a papal request to Bishops throughout the world who had reached or surpassed 75 years of age, Bishop Kearney, then 81, submitted his resignation in October, 1966.

Today, at 84, the retired Bishop still is well and active, fulfilling many ecclesiastical and speaking engagements.

His successor, Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, came to the Diocese for installation ceremonies as sixth Bishop on Dec. 15 at Sacred Heart Cathedral.

For the rite of "enthronement," Francis Cardinal Spellman of New York took Bishop Sheen's right hand, and Bishop Kearney his left, and both led him to the episcopal chair. Forty Bishops attended the Mass and ceremony.

His two-year leadership of the Diocese to date, often dynamic, sometimes spectacular, has been carefully chronicled in the Courier-Journal columns. The dramatic story is still being written, day by day, hour by hour.



Bishop Sheen preaching for the first time in the Diocese at Sacred Heart Cathedral, on Dec. 15, 1966, the day of his installation as sixth Bishop of Rochester.

In implementing the Vatican Council, his administration thus far has been personable, progressive, ecumenical. Among its highlights:

Before making selections for his diocesan "curia," he asked the priests to inform him of those they considered to be the best candidates. He noted that he spent 14 hours tabulating the choices.

New appointments included Vicars for Urban Ministry, Pastoral Planning, and Christian Formation, as well as priests to direct a Spanish Apostolate and four Secular Missions.

Territorial vicariates also were established—the Southern Tier Vicariate, with Very Rev. Bartholomew O'Brien as episcopal vicar, and the Eastern Tier Vicariate, with Very Rev. Raymond Wahl as vicar.

The Bishop authorized selection by the priests of a Priests' Senate. He changed the title of the Chancery to Pastoral Office, and selected laymen to assist in financial administration of the Diocese.

He undertook major changes

in seminary education, broadening the curriculum and scope, and arranging much greater participation of seminarians in assisting in parishes and in various other apostolates.

Ecumenism was advanced through exchanges of pulpits among several churches. More than 2,300 persons overflowed Temple B'rith Kodesh in January, 1967, to hear Bishop Sheen.

The Bishop continually underlined his concern not only for the poor of his Diocese but those of the world. He has imposed a progressive tax, rising to 3 per cent, on all new construction of parish buildings, with the money designated for these poor.

To assist him in overall administration of the Diocese, Bishop Sheen asked for and received two auxiliaries. Two diocesan priests were consecrated in Sacred Heart Cathedral on Mar. 11, 1968—Auxiliary Bishops Dennis W. Hickey and John E. McCafferty.

Rochester's bishops have indeed been outstanding churchmen in the history of Catholicism in the United States.

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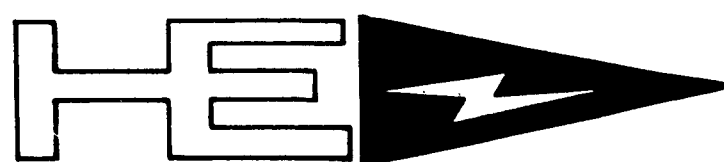
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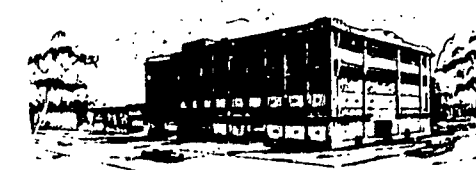
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