

## Nazareth's History

# A Rich Heritage for the Future

Richard M. Nixon, President of the United States, recently wrote:

"For one hundred years Nazareth Academy has immeasurably enriched the life of the community it has served."

These hundred years of enrichment began in August, 1871 when on the feast of the Assumption, Bishop Bernard J. McQuaid dedicated the former home of Major John Williams as Nazareth Academy and Convent. Major Williams was Mayor of Rochester in 1853 and Congressman in 1854.



Bishop Bernard McQuaid

Three years prior to the dedication, the first bishop of Rochester asked a Buffalo community of Sisters of St. Joseph to form a Rochester diocesan community committed to education. Bishop McQuaid once wrote that on the question of educating the young he was regarded by some as a "crank." "But it seems to me that the only hope of the American Church lies in the education of its young," he said.



Mother Stanislaus

The first principal of Nazareth Academy was Reverend Mother Stanislaus. She had a faculty of two Sisters of St. Joseph; and when the school opened in September that year, she welcomed 30 students in grades one through ten.

The school flourished in the early years with a steady increase in registration and the addition of new faculty members. To prepare for teaching, two of the Sisters were sent abroad for a three year course in St. Andrew's Normal School in Bruges, Belgium.

Kloster Bonladen in Wurtemberg, Germany and Collegio Mercelline near Genoa, Italy, were also eventually added to the list

of European schools through which Nazareth Academy teachers passed.

Nazareth Academy celebrated its first high school commencement exercises in 1877, with Miss Jane Leary, later Sister M. Raphael, as its first graduate.

In January of 1880, the only Sister to hold the post of principal twice in her career came to the fore. She was Sister Adelaide Carberry. Under her reign the school gave greater attention to studies of Latin, mathematics and science.

Sister Adelaide reassumed the principalship in 1889 for a brief time. It is speculated that confusion in the record over her exact tenure is due to legal accommodations made for the state Regents program.

In 1880 two lay teachers were added to the faculty and two years later Sister M. Marcella Regan began her 58-year tenure as principal of Nazareth Academy.

The Board of Regents of the State University of New York chartered the school in 1881, thus fulfilling a dream of Bishop McQuaid and, climaxing a decade of mild controversy over the academic measure of Catholic schools in general and the academy in particular.

As early as 1874, Bishop McQuaid directed that Nazareth students take the Regents examinations to prove that Catholic schools were as good as the public schools by the State's own tests.

When talk of Catholic schools voluntarily joining a National Catholic School Board arose with the possibility of standardized Catholic school examinations, Bishop McQuaid quashed the idea saying:

"There is no room for favor, or the smoothing over of defects, as the test of success is in the hands of strangers."

With the charter came the appointment of Father James P. Kiernan as the first Regents Principal of the school.

On Father Kiernan's death at the turn of the century, Father Thomas Hickey was named to the post, and became instructor of religion at the academy.

In 1905 Father Louis Edelman was appointed chaplain to the school and succeeded the new Bishop Thomas F. Hickey as instructor of religion.

Nazareth's administration, under the direction of Bishop Hickey, purchased land on the Doud-Purcell estate on Lake Avenue to erect a new academy building in 1915.

The school moved into its new buildings for classes in September of the following year.

By this time the school had grown to more than 500 elementary and high school students.

Under the direction of Sister Marcella, the school saw such developments as the inauguration of a student government system, the making of clothing during the first world war, the organization of Beta Phi, or the Book Lovers Club, the organization of new language and social groups, the Catholic Students Mission Crusade, the Perosian Choir, the establishment of a home economics department, and, of course, continued construction.

Just 14 days before Sister Marcella's death, Sister M. Hubertine was named principal of the school, in 1940.

The end of the World War II years saw citations and praised heaped on Nazareth Academy. The Treasury department cited the school for distinguished service. Nazareth's bond sales totaled \$349,072.50. The Lanthorn, the school year book (a consistent award winner, like the newspaper The Gabriel) won a Victory Star and All Catholic, All American Medalist Awards in three press association surveys.

Sister Pauline Smyth succeeded Sister Hubertine in 1949. Sister Pauline's first major



Sister Marcella Regan

accomplishment was the establishment of the Nazareth Academy Parent-Teacher Association.

In September of 1953, Sister Agnes Cecelia Troy, now Mother Agnes Cecelia, Mother General of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester, began a ten year term as principal of the school.

Under Sister Agnes Cecelia's principalship, the school saw the appointment of a full-time guidance counselor and the first full-time vice principal, a great deal of renovation and, in 1958, the inauguration of adult education.

The school was honored in 1959 by receiving a Regents Charter for its Future Teachers of America Club. Nazareth was the first Catholic school in the state to receive such a charter.

The Spectrum, a new literary magazine debuted in 1960 and in 1961, the school reached its peak registration when 1500 girls were attending the school.

Sister Jamesetta Slattery was named principal of Nazareth in 1963. The audio visual material of the school was greatly enhanced under her direction.

Sister Annunciata McCabe, vice principal for 12 years, assumed the principalship in 1965; and innovation has been the key during her tenure.

The school moves into the future with monthly "speak-outs" where students can question "the system", with "Chan-Com", a newsletter to parents, with flexible class scheduling and optional study periods and forums set up to explore methods of innovation.

With the treasury of this rich tradition Nazareth plunges into her second century in mutual cooperation and open communication.



Sister Annunciata McCabe