



Bishop Hogan delivers the homily at the Mass of Christ the High Priest.



The Kiss of Peace is exchanged at the Mass.

'His Presence Was A Blessing'

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development that began in 1868 when Bishop McQuaid established the diocese.

Each person whose life was touched by this remarkable prelate will have his own share of memories. My own reach back to 1937 when I was a first year student at St. Bernard's. I recall with gratitude his fatherly concern for us as we aspired to the priesthood—the inspiration of his first Friday conferences—the beauty of the liturgies of ordination and the great celebration of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. I recall the Spring of 1939 when I knelt before him to cast my lot with the Lord in clerical tonsure. He followed my steps all the way to the fullness of the priesthood—ordaining me as porter, lector, exorcist, acolyte, subdeacon, deacon and priest—and then seven years ago escorting me to the 'Cathedra' as his second successor as bishop of the diocese. His fatherly concern and love have been a strong support in every moment of these days of challenge for the shepherd of the 70's.

The words of my personal gratitude are given fine expression in St. Paul's prayer for his beloved people of Philippi:

"I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you making my prayer with joy, thankful for your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now." (Phil. 1: 3-5)

If this were the age of epitaphs, what phrase would we carve beneath the name of James E. Kearney? I am sure we would all agree on one sentence: "He was a good Shepherd." There was nothing of the hireling about him, nothing of the part-time custodian of the flock. Like Christ, his model, he knew his sheep, his sheep knew him, and he served them twenty-four hours a day and twelve months a year. His first pastoral assignment was to the parish of St. Francis Xavier in the Bronx, which he founded in 1928. There he proved his metal as a guide of souls. God saw in him a new David, called him to be

Bishop of Salt Lake City in 1932 and anointed him with his holy oil. Five years later, Pope Pius XI promoted him to Rochester, a much larger diocese. But whether in the Bronx or in Utah or in Western New York, Bishop Kearney was the same sort of priest—one who considered the shepherding of souls to be his duty and his delight.

God who had called him to this duty made him strong with an abundance of apostolic gifts. The most memorable of these gifts was that of eloquence. People loved to listen to him. He spoke with ease, with charm, with wit, with variety and inventiveness. He addressed the heart more than the head, but he always gave his listeners some clear thought to take away.

Another of his pastoral gifts was an uncanny sense of the kind of devotions that appeal to the average Catholic. People loved to follow the rosary broadcast when he conducted it over the Family Rosary for Peace. They loved it when he came to their parishes to bless their little ones. In 1940 when he inaugurated the practice of Family Communion on Holy Family Sunday, he launched a custom that remained popular in the Diocese for over two decades.

Bishop Kearney maintained a busy schedule of activities, liturgical and social, that took him frequently into every part of the Diocese. He was never happier than when he presided at some vast rite in the Cathedral, or Silver Stadium, or at Sampson Naval Training Base where the ritual was impressive and the music excellent. Today we might criticize such ceremonies as triumphalistic. But the Bishop did not foster them for his own greater glory. He simply believed that he should be visible to his people as their teacher and leader in prayer.

Many are the monuments of brick and stone that date from the years of the Kearney episcopate: churches he dedicated, schools he blessed. Most notable among the schools

are the diocesan high schools, Becket Hall Seminary, Nazareth College which he enlarged, St. John Fisher College which he founded. Unfortunately, recent times have not dealt kindly with some of his foundations. Even the noblest human institutions can outlive their usefulness, and brick and mortar can crumble.

Actually, the most enduring monument that a bishop can leave is his own good example. James Edward Kearney exemplified four virtues in particular: reliance on Our Lady, loyalty to our Church, Christian optimism, and patience in suffering.

Bishop Kearney dearly loved his own Irish-born mother. But, of course, he loved the Mother of God still more. He spared no effort to do Mary honor and to urge his flock to turn to her in their needs.

He had an unswerving loyalty to the Church. He expected that the faithful would show reverence and respect for the office he held. After his retirement he insisted that they now owed reverence and respect to those who succeeded him.

He had an admirable Christian optimism. If duty sometimes demanded that he address his people sternly, he would always end on a note of encouragement and hope. After all, he had been called, as Isaiah put it, "to bring glad tidings" (Is 1:3). Recent developments in the Church often did disturb him; but if he spoke of them, he would always conclude, with an optimism based on faith, "The Holy Spirit will not abandon us."

It was especially during the last few weeks of his life that Bishop Kearney gave us a profound object lesson in Christian patience. He must have prayed for that patience, as he sat stooped in his chair; and his prayer must have been like that of Cardinal Newman:

So long thy power hath
blessed me, sure it still
Will lead me on
O'er moor and fen, o'er
crag and torrent, til
The night is gone;

To Our Readers

To devote as much space as possible to the death of Bishop James E. Kearney, we have left out many of our regular features, including our columns. All will be back next edition.



Bishops McCafferty and Hogan accept gifts from Mrs. Joseph Mercier at the offertory.

We share the grief of our Catholic friends on the death of the Most Reverend James E. Kearney, fifth bishop of Rochester.

Edwards

Pittsford and Ridgemont