

# The Tributes to Bishop Kearney

## Auxiliary Bishop Dennis W. Hickey

Bishop Kearney's passing will be mourned by countless people who live within the Diocese of Rochester. None will experience greater grief, however, than the priests who were privileged to be united with him in the presbyterate of the Rochester Diocese. His inspiring talks to generations of seminarians served to center their lives in the Eucharist. His repeated challenge to let every act of the day be a preparation for the next day's Mass enhanced the priests'

daily celebration of the Sacred Mysteries.

Bishop Kearney's implicit trust and confidence in his priests endeared him to all his co-workers. Once he assigned a man to a particular position, he did not worry about performance because he knew that every priest in his diocese shared his dedication and would give his very best as he had promised when Bishop Kearney's hands were laid on him in ordination.

### Ceremonial Chalice Used By Pope Paul

The chalice that will be used for the final ceremony for Bishop Kearney will be the Bishop's own chalice given to him

"With gratitude, loyalty and affection from his priests and people of the Diocese of Rochester on his 81st Birthday, October 28, 1965."

This chalice was first used by Pope Paul VI, Sept. 20, 1965.

## Auxiliary Bishop John E. McCafferty

"The Catholic News" (the New York archdiocesan newspaper) carried in its edition of the first week of November 1932 an account of the consecration of the Rev. James E. Kearney at St. Patrick's Cathedral. An eighth grade boy in the Bronx read the account of the ceremony and was impressed especially by the reported examination "regarding the Holy Trinity and various other matters and customs fitting and necessary for one receiving the episcopal office." The young reader did not know much about ceremonies and saw the "examination" as an academic task the new Bishop must complete or be refused consecration. The boy thought, from the report, that bishops had to be very learned people — intellectual giants.

Five years later, on the evening of Nov. 10, 1937, the same James E. Kearney, having obviously passed the "exam", arrived for in-

stallation in Rochester from his first diocese in Utah. The same boy, now a resident of Rochester, was at the old railroad station on Central Avenue. It was an exciting moment when the bishop, about whom he had read five years previously, spoke to Rochesterians for the first time behind the marble balustrade overlooking the spacious waiting area. And all the people who saw him and heard him that evening knew that Church of Rochester had a vigorous, friendly and learned bishop to lead the Church of Rochester.

I was that boy. And my association with Bishop Kearney was to continue ever after. As one of his young priests, I was chosen in 1946 to serve in his Curia and did so until he relinquished his office 20 years later. He was a co-consecrator when I was called to the fullness of the priesthood and took the "examination" in his presence.

During the last month, I have seen Bishop Kearney several times at St. Ann's Home. He was old and weak and weary, but I still saw only the learned, eloquent, kind and vigorous churchman he was throughout his long active life. That is the only Bishop Kearney who was and is.

His devotion to the Church, his faithful, selfless, courageous obedience to the Holy See, his concern for the authentic re-presentation of Christ in teaching and worship, his personal charity, his sense of humor, all declare him to be a nobleman among God's people. No one who has shared his life and some of his burdens can be less than grateful. His style of leadership is a model and a memory to be cherished and a goal to be sought.

May he dwell forever on the Blessed Vision of God and the Blessed Mother he loved so tenderly.

## Bishop Lawrence B. Casey of Paterson, N.J.

Bishop Kearney's death marks the end of an era, an important period in the long history of the Diocese of Rochester. His administration of 29 years comprised the end of the Great Depression, the World War II years, and 20 years of notable expansion and growth.

As bishop, the man we mourn was essentially a parish priest. He liked to get out among the people, especially the young, and he would take any parish function he could fit into

his busy schedule. He was unofficially Rochester's First Citizen, equally beloved by Catholics and non-Catholics.

Bishop Kearney's refined and cultivated common sense, backed up by wide reading, a prodigious memory, a strong prayer life, made him one of the best occasional speakers in the country. He was equal to every occasion.

The Bishop had the personal touch, a

genuine concern for others. Thousands of letters and cards, written in that fine copperplate script of his, are treasured in many homes and rectories and convents throughout the diocese — reminders of a great bishop who loved his people and was loved by them.

Bishop Casey was secretary to Bishop Kearney from 1937 to 1946, and auxiliary bishop from 1953 to 1966.

## Father James Moynihan, Former Secretary to Bishop Kearney

Outside of a chance meeting with the man when I was a youngster of eight or nine and my subsequent reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation from him a year or so later, my contact with Bishop Kearney for all practical purposes began when I started serving Mass at his residence in 1948.

Those early morning trips to 947 East Ave. had a certain mystique about them probably resulting from a combination of factors. There was the stately elegance of the house itself, rather dimly lit except for the chapel; the thought of the breakfast which I knew would follow, usually with the Bishop, and some of the best coffee that I have ever tasted!

But most of all it was the prospect of serving Bishop Kearney that generated whatever interest and excitement is possible in an early morning rising. He was one of the most thoughtful people I have ever met. Little gifts to me from time to time were standard practice; books, with a clever message penned on the

flyleaf, and signed in that unmistakable Kearney script, were always a treat.

On occasions when I was asked to chauffeur a visitor from the train station to his residence, I knew that if somehow or other the visitor and I should fail to connect, I could count on receiving a good-natured kidding from the Bishop. I remember one such episode in which the person must have walked right past me to a waiting taxi. I finally decided to call the Bishop and inform him that the guest had not arrived. The response over the phone was "He's out here having breakfast."

He was a pious deep-thinking man, a devoted bishop and, as I later came to understand, a marvelous person with whom to work. While he delegated the routine administration of the diocese to others, he revered his clergy and in the best sense of Vatican II stood in the midst of his people as their devoted shepherd in Christ. Who knew his sheep and whose sheep knew him.

We Share  
your loss

Bishop  
James E. Kearney

Fifth Bishop  
of Rochester  
1937 - 1966

KEYS