

Bishop Sheen

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awards in the secular arena and in church-related universities.

He was appointed by Pope John XXIII to the Vatican II Commission on the Missions, in 1962, and by Pope Paul VI to the post-conciliar Commission on the Missions in 1965. The American bishops named him to their first administrative committee, in the formation of their national conference, and to the first Committee for the Propagation of the Faith.

He was born May 8, 1895, on a farm in El Paso, Ill., one of four sons of Newton and Delia Fulton Sheen. In his childhood, the family moved to Peoria, Ill., and he went to school to the Brothers of Mary at Spalding Institute. He took bachelor's and master's degrees at St. Viator College in Bourbonnais, Ill., completed his studies for the priesthood at St. Paul's Seminary in St. Paul, Minn., and was ordained for the Diocese of Peoria on Sept. 20, 1919.

In the next year, he obtained baccalaureate degrees in Sacred Theology and Canon Law at the Catholic University of America, then pursued a doctorate at the University of Louvain in Belgium. He studied also at the Sorbonne in Paris and the Collegio Angelico in Rome, and received the STD degree in Rome in 1924. After a year of teaching in England, he returned home to serve briefly as an assistant at St. Patrick's parish, Peoria. From 1926 until 1950 he was on the Catholic University faculty.

As a young priest, Father Sheen preached summer conferences at Westminster Cathedral in London in 1925 and 1928-1931. He lectured at the Catholic Summer School at Cambridge University in 1930 and 1931, and for many years he was Lenten preacher at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York, and elsewhere. From 1930 until 1952 he was with the radio Catholic Hour, which went around the world by short wave and in the United States alone reached a weekly audience estimated at four million. His Life is Worth Living series, 1951 to 1957, had 123 outlets on television and 300 on radio, with an estimated audience of 30 million people. In addition he regularly wrote columns syndicated in both the Catholic and secular press.

COURIER-JOURNAL

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Vol. 96 No. 33 December 12, 1979

Courier-Journal (USPS 135-580)
Published weekly by the Rochester Catholic Press Association. Subscription rates: Single copy 25¢; 1 year subscription in U.S. \$10. Canada and Foreign \$15.00. Offices: Richford Building, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604. (716) 454-7050. Second Class Postage paid at Rochester, N.Y.

Courier Journal



Bishop Clark addresses the press on the death of Archbishop Sheen.

and published about 70 books. Also in circulation are tapes of retreats and conferences he has conducted in recent years.

The library at St. Bernard's Seminary has a growing collection of these in the Fulton John Sheen Archives, which the archbishop dedicated in the autumn of 1976 when he came to Rochester to celebrate his 25th anniversary as a bishop. It is expected that the archives eventually will contain his private and public papers, as well as an extensive collection of photographs, recordings and memorabilia.

The prelate was made an auxiliary bishop in the Archdiocese of New York by Pope Pius XII, in 1951. He had been named a Papal Chamberlain in 1934 and a Domestic Prelate the following year.

He was installed as Bishop of Rochester on Dec. 15, 1966, and declared his intention "to implement the directives of the Vatican Council" and "make Rochester a demonstration diocese." He convened the first diocesan Priests' Council, established new ministries to the poor, and changed personnel and financial management procedures in the Pastoral Office. He also called a moratorium on confirmations, raising the age from 11 or 12 to the mid-teens. He secured two auxiliaries, Bishops John E. McCafferty and Dennis W. Hickey, and established regional vicariates.

The bishop's sense of dedication to the poor was made well known to Rochesterians by both his

words and actions. Yet he felt that he had failed to communicate it. In interviews following his resignation, he spoke of his "inability to arouse the whole Catholic population to the needs of the inner city." And in reference to his unsuccessful attempt to turn over a parish to the federal government as a housing site, he said, "We failed to crash the property barrier."

Asked by interviewers to identify his "greatest accomplishments," he spoke of the rural missions he had established and the home Masses he had introduced.

He thought that the Bishop Sheen Housing Foundation had failed, but the foundation lately celebrated what it called a "banner year" in its work of providing loans to help poor families make down payments on homes.

Bishop Sheen resigned from Rochester on Oct. 15, 1969, and left the diocese in November, on the day after the consecration of his successor, Bishop Joseph L. Hogan.

"I am not resigning work," he said at the time. "I am not retiring; I am regenerating." And he said he would return to preaching, writing, conducting retreats and creating television programs. As it turned out, he did all of these things.

He was Titular Archbishop of Newport, Wales, by appointment of Pope Paul VI.



We join with the
Rochester Diocese
in the mourning of
Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen
1966-1969
Bishop of Rochester



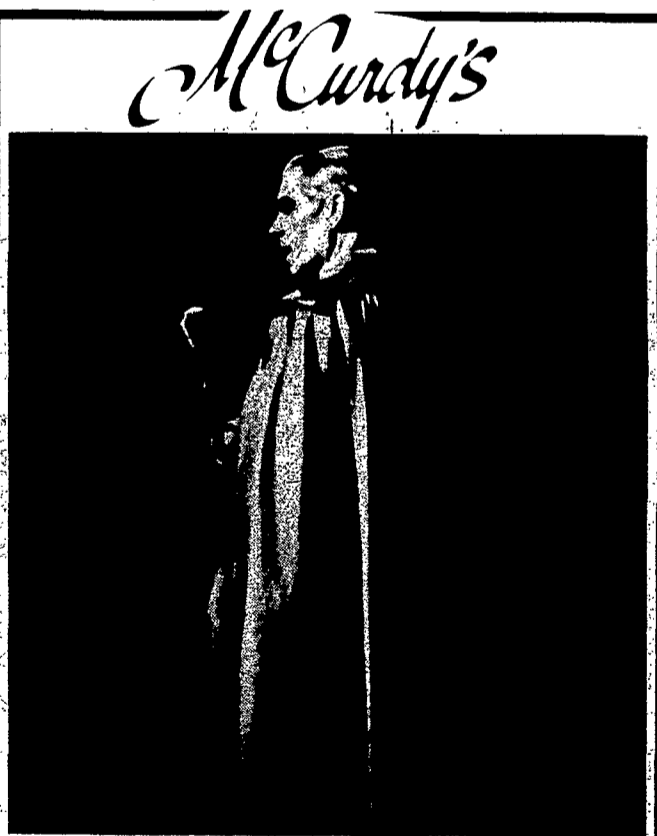
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Deeply mourns with the Rochester
Diocese in the passing of
Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen
Bishop of Rochester

Oct. 26, 1966 to Oct. 16, 1969



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Rochester Community in
mourning the loss of

The Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen
Bishop of Rochester
1966-1969