

# The Church in Rochester

To show the changing role of the Church in the city as Rochester notes its sesquicentennial anniversary, the Courier-Journal chose parishes and institutions which are only representative of many more performing similar services.

## Sisters of St. Joseph

In less than a month after they arrived in Canandaigua in 1854, the Sisters of St. Joseph had established an academy and free school, incorporated as "academy and orphan asylum," a medical dispensary and a novitiate — all the works characteristic of the congregation.

Between the time of Mother Agnes Spencer, who brought the congregation here from St. Louis, and today, under the leadership of Sister Elizabeth Anne LeValley, the congregation has grown from four members at a single site to 583 perpetually professed Sisters spread not only throughout the diocese but to Alabama and Latin America as well.

In the Rochester area alone, the congregation maintains and staffs Nazareth College of Rochester, Nazareth Academy (recently recognized as one of the finest private high schools in the country), Nazareth Hall, St. Joseph's Villa, The School of the Holy Childhood, and St. Ann's Home/The Heritage.

In addition, Sisters run a Montessori school, administer and staff a number of grammar schools in the city, and not a few are engaged in other ministries directly affecting Rochester life.

The SSJs have a member as part of the pastoral team at Immaculate Conception Church and staff St. Monica's School. One runs Project MORE. The order is planning a soup kitchen and a Sister directs the Corpus Christi Health Center.

Three assistant superintendents in the diocesan Department of General Education are Sisters of St. Joseph.

Yet another is chairperson of the diocesan International Justice and Peace Commission, and a Sister of St. Joseph is administrative assistant to the diocesan Department of Justice and Peace.

Sisters are chaplains at Rochester Institute of Technology and the University of Rochester and its Eastman School of Music. A congregation member holds the chair of the Catholic Health Care Council, and Sisters are chaplains at both Highland and Park Ridge hospitals.

The congregation actually arrived in Rochester a decade after the Canandaigua foundation. Four years later, the Diocese of Rochester was created and the Sisters formed a Rochester diocesan community, breaking off from a center in Buffalo; and the first city motherhouse was at Jay and Frank streets.



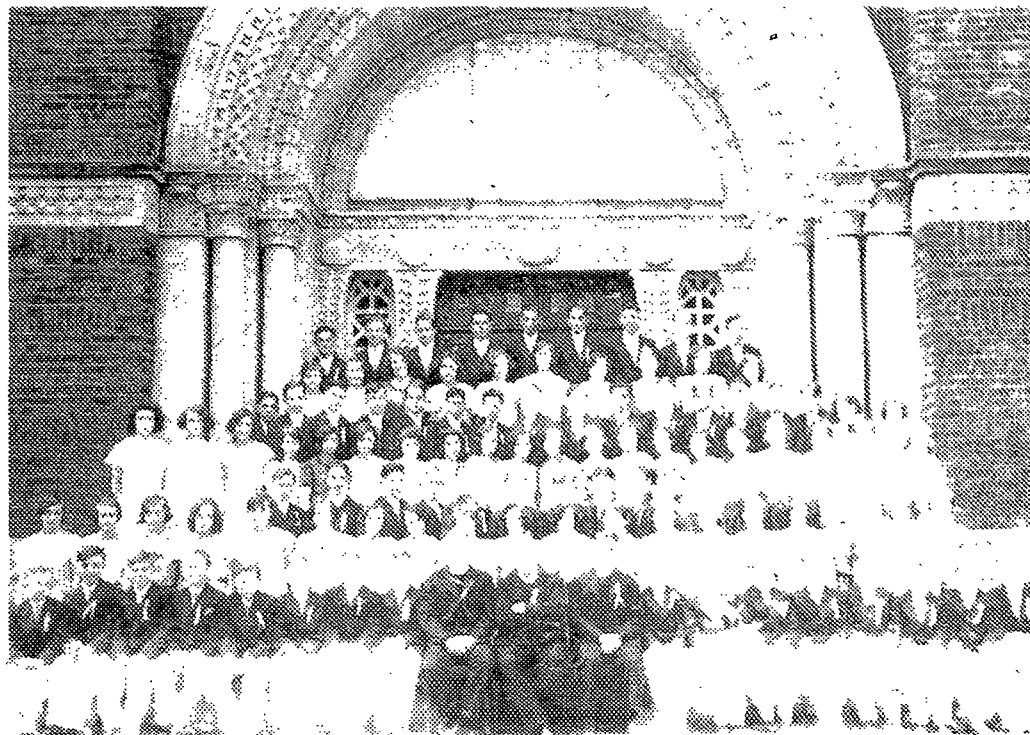
## Sisters of Mercy

Since Mother Frances Warde (left), in 1857, established in Old St. Mary's Convent a group of Sisters of Mercy from Dublin, to the present, under the leadership of Sister Jean Marie Kears (right), the congregation has grown to 265 perpetually professed members staffing a number of diocesan institutions and special ministries. From the first, the Sisters served the Rochester community in education and care of the poor and sick, founding an academy, an industrial school, a day care center and shelter for homeless women, a hospital, a soup kitchen and an employment center. Today, the Sisters are engaged in many Rochester ministries. One is executive director of Rochester Interfaith Jail Ministries, another founded and directs the Northwest Hearing and Speech Center. An RSM directs the diocesan Division of Special Pastoral Ministries, another directs the Mercy Center for the Aging and serves on the state bishops' Commission on the elderly. The Mercys staff Melita House for pregnant women and members are pastoral assistants at Mt. Carmel, Holy Redeemer and Holy Redeemer and run St. Michael's Woodshop.

## St. Mary's Hospital

On Sept. 18, 1857, the Rochester Union and Advertiser ran the following notice: "The Sisters of Charity have just opened a hospital for the sick in the stone buildings of Genesee and Brown streets. The institution shall ever be open to the sick of all denominations or of none. No distinction will be made. Patients who desire spiritual help from pastors of other beliefs shall have every necessity afforded them to obtain this consolation. The Sisters are very willing to admit the sick and poor gratis as far as their need will demand even if they have no funds or endowment. They can do little at present except to give gratis their time and kindest attention. The Sisters will procure

for their patients the finest surgical and medical attention in the city." The oldest hospital in the City of Rochester was founded during a plague of cholera by Sister Felisimo O'Brien who wrote the Union and Advertiser's notice. She, Sister Martha Bridgeman and Sister Felisia Fenwick of the Daughters of Charity opened their hospital in two stone stables with \$1,300, and admitted their first patient Sept. 15. And this very day, still under the direction of the Daughters of Charity, St. Mary's Hospital last year treated 7,751 patients in the hospital; 3,900 out patients; and 25,000 emergency cases.



## St. Monica's.....Then

The 1930 graduation class of St. Monica's School.



## St. Monica's.....Today

Mrs. Bettye Brown teaches St. Monica's first graders. According to figures released from the diocesan education office, more than 97 percent of the student population is black.

The Divisions of Education, Social Ministries and Urban Services receive aid from the Bishop's Annual Thanks Giving Appeal.





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