

Scrapbook

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came the chance to participate personally. He had joined the line to register for the draft in April 1942. Although he was past the acceptable age, he knew that the symbolism of his action would not go unnoticed. He was happy to back the USO recreational centers in Rochester, and accepted full charge of the similar center in Geneva. The service center at Geneva was called for because of the establishment in 1942 of the vast, if temporary, Sampson naval training station on the eastern slope of Seneca Lake.

Bishop Kearney celebrated Mass and preached at the Geneva USO on several occasions, and in two instances administered group confirmation. His most memorable liturgy at Sampson was the great pontifical Mass of July 4, 1944. On that day 16,000 naval servicemen were in attendance.

Another unanticipated apostolate within the diocese was the care of prisoners of war. The Italian prisoners came first, in 1943; the German prisoners followed them in 1944. These captives were scattered out from Rochester into over a dozen temporary camps within the 12 diocesan territories. Forbidden by international law to engage in defense work, they were usually employed for pay in food-processing plants. When western New York was buried by the big snow of December 11-12, 1944, German POWs could be seen shoveling out the drifts on Rochester's streets! Local clergy, especially priests with a knowledge of Italian or German, helped these prisoners as much as they could. Eighteen of the priests were auxiliary chaplains, with faculties from the Catholic military diocese.

But Rochester's fifth bishop was most outstanding in wartime as leader in prayer. In his public liturgies (which he celebrated with customary grace), in his sermons (and he was gifted as a popular preacher), and in his pastoral communications, he constantly emphasized prayer especially to Our Lady, as the surest means of binding together families split by war, and of achieving a just peace. When V-J day finally arrived on August 14, 1945, Bishop Kearney, in his statement of rejoicing, pointed out to his people that this terrible struggle that had begun on the feast of the Immaculate Conception in 1941, had ended on the eve of the feast of Mary's Assumption. Our Lady had not ignored the many petitions sent to her.

The *Courier* had issued a wartime rotogravure magazine on November 23, 1943, to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the diocese. In its introductory article, Bishop Kearney praised the response of his diocesans abroad and at home as providing "vibrant proof that we are alive to our responsibilities to God and country ... united in support of the cause we know is just."

The bishop also wrote an introduction to the *Courier's* comparable Victory Issue, published on January 10, 1946. Here Kearney was more subdued. He was ready to admit that victory had not yet "brought the kind of peace for which we prayed and for which our boys fought and died." The "grim shadow of the atomic bomb" and the unreadiness of nations to acknowledge the God who had brought them victory, were to him disconcerting.

In the 1950s and 1960s, our nation was to become once again involved in two other

foreign wars that were far less "popular" than World War II had been. Since Korea and Vietnam, Americans have been divided on the issue of war in general. Along with this division there had developed a cynical attitude, not always undeserved, towards government "flag-waving." Only since the erection of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington have there been signs of a renewed realization among Americans that there is and should be among us a love of country that may in emergency even demand that we defend its ideals with our lives.

Bishop Kearney had been raised in the

old-time American patriotism. He had lived patriotically through World War I, and his sense of "piety" towards the United States suffered no diminution during World War II. If he trusted the government's leadership in these matters, it was doubtless for two reasons. First, there was the traditional American attitude in wartime. Second, there was the long-standing desire among American Catholics, who were reputed by many other Americans to be "second-class citizens," to prove themselves truly devoted to their flag.

The American bishops of 1989, fulfilling

their task in a more secularized world, are properly more critical of governmental policies. But that stance should nowise reflect on the heartfelt *amor patriae* (love of country) that Bishop Kearney and his diocesan newspaper cultivated during World War II. Today we pray with Pope Paul VI, "Never again war." Yet, are not those who defend their land and its dreams in emergency responding to the great commandment of love of neighbor even to the death? The Roman poet Horace, though a pagan, spoke words consonant with Christian sentiment when he wrote, "It is sweet and fitting to die for one's homeland."

Leland

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tage's release.

That day, the execution deadline was extended by four hours, then put off indefinitely. The Cicippio family held a thanksgiving prayer service at the end of the day at Thomas Cicippio's house.

"It was going to be a very trying day," Thomas Cicippio said. "What could be a nicer way to start out a day than by going to Mass? Going to Mass gave us that early lift that we needed very desperately."

Father Ralph J. Chieffo, who celebrated the Mass, said the family has "been through an emotional roller coaster the last three years; the last few days have just heightened it."

"There are two things that really help me through this," Thomas Cicippio said. "One is my faith in God. And then I also receive a lot of strength from my brother

Joseph. Here's a man whose freedom has been taken away from him. He gives me the strength I need — just thinking of him."

Joseph Cicippio was the youngest boy in a family of nine children. He worked in the banking industry in the Norristown area. His first marriage, which ended in divorce, produced seven children.

Father Edmond Murphy, pastor emeritus of St. Paul Parish in Norristown, recalled the hostage as "a very nice fellow" who sent his children to the parish school and volunteered for parish activities.

Joseph Cicippio lived in Saudi Arabia for four years before moving to Beirut, where he worked as deputy comptroller of the American University Hospital. He married a Moslem woman and converted to Islam.

"Joe felt very safe working at Islam university," recalled Thomas Cicippio. "The war seemed far away."

Eddie Brown, a boyhood friend of

Joseph Cicippio, agreed. "He stopped by a few days before he left for Lebanon," Brown said. "He was saying, 'This'll be great. This'll be nice. We're away from the war.'"

"I feel terrible, but I never give up hope," Brown said. "We pray for him all the time."

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