

Centennial scrapbook

1930s: Depression sparked Catholic-action groups

By Father Robert F. McNamara
Guest contributor

On April 7, 1932, the Diocese of Rochester took over operations of the *Catholic Courier and Journal*, renaming it the *Catholic Courier*.

The reason for the diocesan takeover was that the Great Depression was about to force the lay owners of the *CC&J* to discontinue publication. Two beneficent lay apostolates grew out of the Depression and have made such an enduring contribution to the church that their establishments rank as headline events of the decade. These worthy enterprises are the parish credit union and the Catholic Worker Movement.

Five parish credit unions were established in Rochester during the latter years of the depression. The first was the Holy Family Credit Union, which received a charter from the State of New York on April 21, 1938. Holy Family Credit Union proved of great value to its shareholders during the remaining years of the depres-

sion. After World War II, when the parishioners were once more able to undertake building programs, the union was even handier. By 1952 membership had reached 1031. In 1956, assets of \$350,000 made it the second-largest credit union in the state.

The credit union at Holy Family still continues in operation. In recent years it has assisted many families to pay tuition for their school children. Membership in 1989 is down to 800, but the assets are \$298,000.

Following the leadership of Holy Family, four other local German parishes set up credit unions. St. Andrew's Church received a state charter in 1938; Holy Redeemer in 1939; Our Lady of Perpetual Help in 1939; and Ss. Peter and Paul in 1940. These later corporations accumulated smaller assets, and all had ceased operation by 1965 due to competition offered by credit unions established by businesses and secular organizations.

The Catholic Worker Movement was a



File photo
The late Catholic activist Dorothy Day inspired the foundation of Rochester's Catholic Worker house.

totally different enterprise. It almost disdained finances, and promoted a sense of self-giving to the needy.

The national CW movement was launched in New York City on May Day, 1933, with the publication of a newspaper, the

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1910s: Catholic Charities umbrella enables agencies to operate more efficiently

By Father Robert F. McNamara
Guest contributor

The *Courier's* third decade ran from 1909 to 1919. World War I dominated the decade's international scene, but the banner event within the Diocese of Rochester was unquestionably the establishment, beginning in 1912, of Rochester Catholic Charities.

Today this umbrella association is thriving under the name Catholic Family Center, and during its nearly 80 years of service it has chalked up many notable achievements.

The increasing industrialization of society during this century's early years created a need for greater efficiency among charitable groups, which in turn demanded

that these divergent groups organize under comprehensive associations. As early as 1908, for instance, Rochester's civic leaders — Protestant, Jewish and Catholic — began lobbying for the amalgamation of local charities. The result of their efforts was the founding of United Charities of Rochester, incorporated on May 17, 1910.

Although UCR was intended to preserve the identities of the religious denominations it comprised, Rochester's second bishop, Thomas F. Hickey, later concluded that the organization had somehow infringed on the autonomy of the Catholic institutions, and withdrew from the affiliation. UCR eventually trimmed its own aims, and continues today as Family Service of Rochester.

Still, the bishop realized that Catholic charitable societies could themselves profit by closer cooperation. Therefore, in 1912, he founded the Catholic Charity Guild. Financed by dues, gifts and "benefits," volunteers reached out to work in aid to immigrants; catechetics; settlement work; supervised recreation, visitation and nursing; and general aid to the poor. In 1915, the Catholic Men's Charity League was founded to generate additional funding.

During a meeting of New York state's bishops in early 1917, the bishops delegated Bishop Hickey and Thomas B. Cusack, the bishop of Albany, to present to the New York State Legislature a bill for the incorporation of the charities of each

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1900s: Tireless bishop founded home for elderly 'orphans'

By Father Robert F. McNamara
Guest contributor

As the *Catholic Journal*, began its second decade, the opening in 1906 of St. Ann's Home for the Aged provided the biggest news headlines.

St. Ann's was Bishop McQuaid's last foundation, just preceding his death in 1909. But unlike our two seminaries and a number of now-defunct institutions that date from his years as bishop, St. Ann's has not only endured but still provides an invaluable service as well.

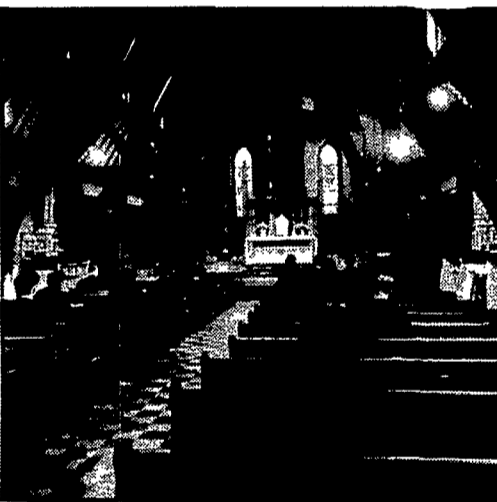
The tireless bishop fell ill with pneumonia around the time of his 80th birthday in 1903. Idled by his illness, he had long thoughts about aging and death. What sad-

dened him most was the fact that so many older people had nobody to care for them. Out of these thoughts came his resolution to "build a home for the aged that would be worthy of my declining years."

Following his recovery, Bishop McQuaid set about planning for "St. Ann's Home for the Aged." He bought a property on Lake Avenue between the present Merrill Street and Eastman Avenue. The initial unit was a two-story structure with its own chapel and built to house 150 women and 30 men.

After World War II, when building materials again became available, the diocese decided to build a new St. Ann's Home.

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File photo
Seminarians gathered in the chapel of the former St. Bernard's Seminary, which was sold to Eastman Kodak in 1982.

'20s: Education prime focus

By Father Robert F. McNamara
Guest contributor

Decade number four in the annals of the *Catholic Courier* ran from 1919 to 1929. What was the outstanding diocesan event of that period?

I would say there were two outstanding events: the foundation of Nazareth College and the opening of Aquinas Institute. Nazareth College was an outgrowth of Nazareth Academy. Aquinas Institute would give birth to St. John Fisher College.

The high school that came to be called Aquinas was 30 years younger than Nazareth Academy. The academy has always been operated by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester, a religious order initiated in 1868 by Rochester's first bishop, Bernard J. McQuaid. In 1871, the order's first superior, Mother Stanislaus Leary, purchased a residence on the northeast corner of Jay Street and Plymouth Avenue North, just up the street from St. Patrick's Cathedral. Here she housed both the community's motherhouse and a girls' secondary school, named Nazareth Academy, to serve both day and boarding students.

It wasn't too long before the school outgrew its facilities. The sisters therefore built for it the home that it still occupies at 1001 Lake Ave.

Nazareth College of Rochester opened on Sept. 25, 1924, and received formal incorporation by state law the following April 9. The original home of the college bore witness to its parentage. It was the handsome old Rouse residence at 981 Lake Ave., in the shadow of Nazareth Academy.

If Nazareth College grew out of a private academy for girls, Aquinas High School was the outgrowth of the parochial school of St. Patrick's Cathedral. St. Patrick's Parish was the first Catholic congregation organized in western New York (1820).

The parish school entered operation in 1839. In 1886 the Sisters of St. Joseph assumed charge, teaching both the boys and

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'90s: Seminary established

By Father Robert F. McNamara
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Without a doubt, the most notable diocesan occurrence of the 1890s was the opening in 1893 of St. Bernard's Seminary.

As a result of the ecumenical Council of Trent (1545-1653), it was decreed that, wherever possible, each bishop should operate a seminary in his own diocese as part of the Church's response to the Protestant Reformation.

In 1868, Bernard J. McQuaid was installed as the first bishop of the diocese of Rochester. Within a year he had set up a pre-

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to encourage one another..."***

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Diocese of Rochester

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