

# Diocese delved new paths under 'Joseph of Rochester'

By Father Michael F. Conboy  
Guest contributor

I served with then-Monsignor Joseph Hogan as his associate at St. Margaret Mary Parish in Irondequoit when he was picked by Bishop Fulton J. Sheen in 1969 to be his successor as the seventh bishop of the Diocese of Rochester.

On Oct. 15, 1969, I found an envelope at my place at the rectory table that was simply addressed: "Mike, to be opened anytime after 9 a.m."

The note inside read, "Dear Mike, Your pastor is now the Bishop-elect of the Diocese of Rochester. Please pray for me." It was signed, "Ack" — a nickname he owned since his school days because of his academic abilities. I still treasure this special note among my memorabilia.

Two days later, the bishop-elect asked me to be his priest-secretary. That invitation was one to accompany him on the faith journey he would undergo in the coming years.

It was also an invitation to accompany him on other journeys, ones that would take us from 50 Chestnut Street to 1150 Buffalo Road; to the Victor episcopal residence; to each and every parish and institution in the 12-county diocese; to Rome; to the South American missions; and to the current time as our retired bishop celebrates 50 years of priesthood.

Monsignor Hogan's final Mass at St. Margaret Mary's was Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 27, 1969.

Father Bill Lum, the school Sisters of Notre Dame, myself and our daily assistant, the late Monsignor Wilfred T. Craugh, joined the St. Margaret Mary's faith community in offering tribute to our pastor — soon to be our new bishop.

When the great ordination day arrived, Bishop Hogan said that his immediate concerns would be education, vocations and ecumenism.

Putting his hand to the plow, as it were, he chose as his own motto, the words of St. Paul, (2 Cor. 12:15), "Gladly will I spend and be spent," words used as well for the Becket Hall motto. One was mentioned that he hoped the bishop wasn't referring to money when he used the word "spend."

The bishop himself said, "It expresses a high ideal, indeed. All I can promise is to strive for it with all my heart."

The day of episcopal ordination was a day of new beginnings for the diocese. The Episcopal ceremony suggested servanthood and collegiality with the community — a shift, indeed, from the old days of the prince-bishop.

Speaking from his pulpit at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Bishop Hogan proclaimed, "Rather than being dismayed by the turbulence of our era, I rejoice in the power of the Holy Spirit offered to me today with the same love with which He confirmed the first bishops and the infant church on the first Pentecost."

Bishop Hogan took on his episcopal responsibilities during those early years following Vatican II when much was coming to birth.

I remember us going to a little village south of Rochester as area clergy were assembled to

learn of the new liturgy. The old pastor was in the church reciting a "Requiem Mass" in the pre-conciliar form. When we stopped by, he caught sight of us. We thought he was about ready for a heart attack. The bishop knew then that trips through the 12-county diocese were mighty important.

Fast on the heels of liturgical reform came permission for anticipated Masses on Saturday evening and auxiliary ministers of the Eucharist. Parish after parish quickly wrote and received the go-ahead.

The impact of the Vatican II council was also felt in the local church in the reawakening of interest in various ministries and the expansion of others. Social ministries, in particular, received new emphasis.

In our diocese, for example, the office of Black Catholics was established, and the Hispanic community was recognized.

Bishop Hogan believed and taught that all life issues are much a part of the church's agenda in our day. In one case, he used his voice of office to decry the social injustices of the "Farah Slack" dispute because of unjust salaries for migrant workers.

It was during this time that the confrontation took place at nearby Attica Correctional Facility. This 1971 confrontation focused attention on the need for the church's involvement in prisons. Bishop Hogan always found time to visit correctional facilities in Auburn and Elmira and to meet with inmates and guards.

The universal church was not alone, however, in "moving" in new directions.

In this diocese, the moving of the Chancery Office from 50 Chestnut Street in September, 1972, to Buffalo Road, signaled more than a change of location.

Indeed, the Pastoral Center, a concept conceived by Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, became a fuller reality and continues to serve our 12-county diocese today. The former St. Andrew's Seminary/Kings Prep building provided much-needed space for expanding ministries and offices that formed because of new demands.

The Pastoral Center has always required a balancing of needs and bureaucracy. Meeting needs was a concern for the bishop. He decried any attempts at creating an image of bureaucracy. I remember one gentleman who needed to be stopped in his tracks as he delivered photocopied articles from *The Wall Street Journal* each day for the bishop's reading.

Around the time of the Buffalo Road move, the bishop changed his residence to a former convent on the property of St. Patrick's Church in Victor. A few eyebrows were raised since the bishop would be residing outside the see city and county.

The move to Ontario County, however, would give the Livingston County native room and opportunity to ride his bike, cook over the charcoal grill, set up his beautiful outdoor Christmas creche — which he has done with the able assistance of Father Bill Leone ever since.

It was always a pleasure for the bishop to invite monthly the various ordination classes of



On Nov. 28, 1968, newly ordained Bishop Joseph L. Hogan (right) — joined by — waves to crowds outside of Sacred Heart Cathedral.



Father Joseph L. Hogan was a professor of Latin and social studies at St. Andrew's Junior Seminary from 1945-1949.

his priests for a concelebrated Mass, social, dinner and chat. His fond hope was to keep in touch with the priests, to hear their concerns and be supportive of them. He was always fearful that he could distance himself from them and thus be less effective in handling his leadership in ministry.

The Victor home has been ideal for Bishop Hogan. Around the quiet dinner table was when we first experienced meat fondue and enjoyed the delectables of the ever-faithful housekeeper Laura Wosnick, who is in retirement now due to chronic illness.

Laura once prepared a lovely chicken salad for a guest and the person thanked her profusely for "that wonderful tuna fish." Laura laughed for a week!

With a bit of naughtiness in mind I remember teasing Laura that I had bought a puppy for the bishop as a Christmas gift. "But Father Conboy," she asked, "who will take care of it when you and the bishop are not here?"

Good question. I always regretted that the purchase was never made.

Bishop Hogan was not only concerned with the diocese, large as it is. We are only one small part of a church that claims universality in territory, interests and concerns.

Following the Second Vatican Council, religious congregations accepted the late Pope Paul VI's invitation to send a percentage of each community's personnel to evangelize and assist people in the Third World nations.

The diocese, too, had undertaken a similar mission as it sent its first local missionaries to Bolivia during the late Bishop James E. Kearney's administration. One day early in his epis-



Bishop Hogan made the first missions in Brazil, and also

copy, Bishop Hogan mentioned should go to Latin America. He had already begun providing the Brazilian missions — a praiseworthy response and which many families. We coordinate trips to Latin America in March 1970.

The short and narrow Brazilian challenge at each and every step Hogan. Nevertheless, he proved able to the unfamiliar South A



In this photo from January, 1974, Bishop Hogan concelebrates Mass at St. Rita's Church with the pastor, Father Francis A. Klehammer (now deceased), and Father Michael F. Conboy (right).