

Continued from page 5

devout and observed the church rules very carefully." She added that she perceived a "close feeling among them."

It was this sense of "close feeling," of "Catholic belonging" that Bernard McQuaid sought to promote in all his people. He wanted them to become good American citizens, for this Gotham-born son of Irish immigrants was himself a strong patriot.

Yet he was a patient "Americanizer." He founded linguistic parishes for the Continental peoples and encouraged them to pass down their native tongues, but he knew that their descendants could only grow up Americanized. Churches he built for all, and to man them he dared to found not only a preparatory, but a theological seminary.

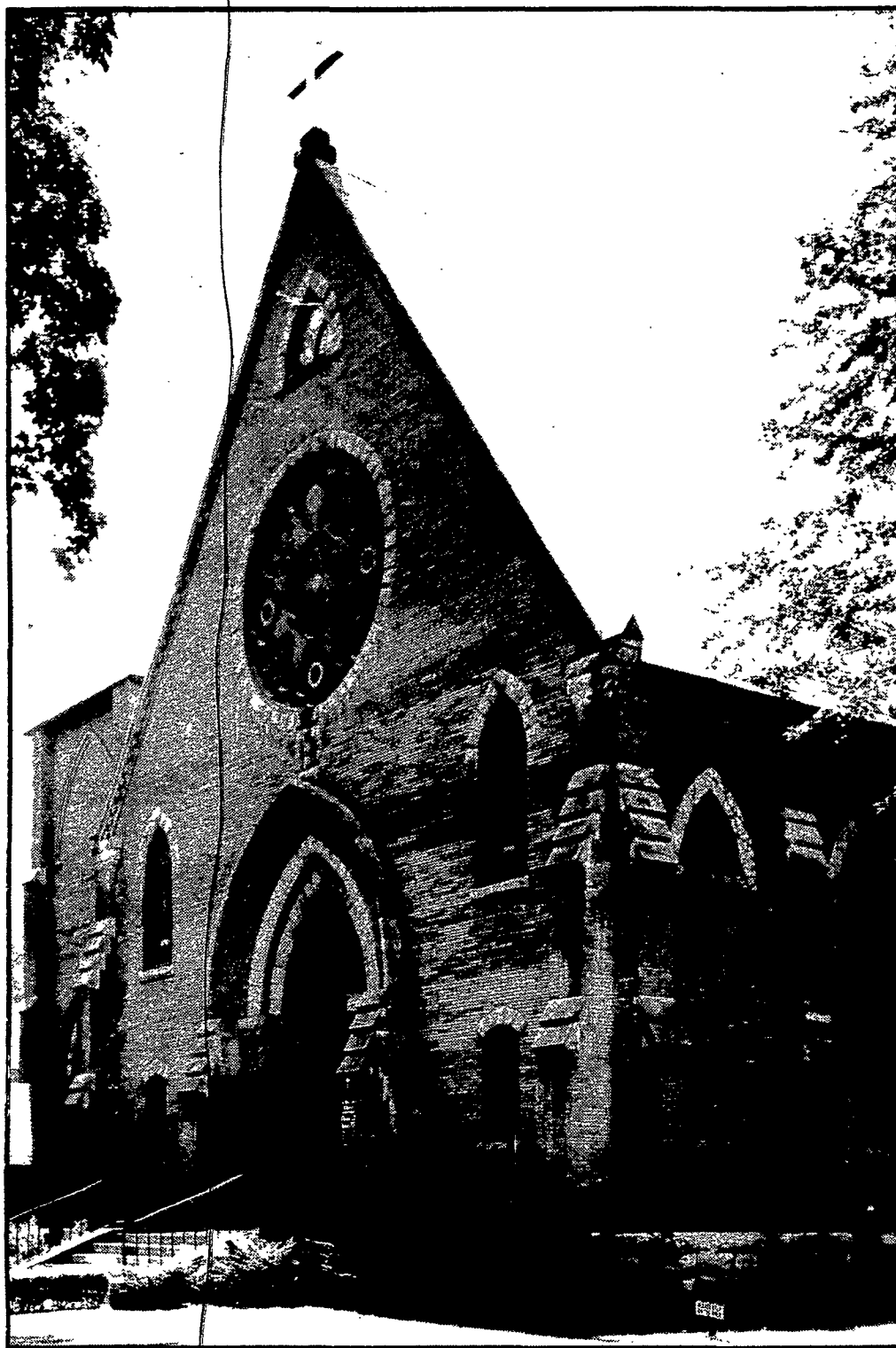
Out of St. Bernard's Seminary came a home-grown presbyterate — observant, of course, but loyal to its bishop. For the children he established a remarkable system of Catholic schools, entrusted chiefly to a home-grown religious sisterhood of his own creation. He, who grew up in an orphanage, did not forget the needs of the diocesan orphans; nor, when himself an octogenarian, did he neglect due solicitude for the aging. It has been said of this diocese's faithful (as of other American dioceses) that they became ghettoized in our largely non-Catholic nation.

This may be true, but it was scarcely escapable in our era of acculturation. Furthermore, it will always remain the duty of pastors to remind the faithful of their "difference." The inherent tension between the spirit and the "world" must never be forgotten.

When I say that Bishop McQuaid (and his successors) did thus and so, I mean, of course, that they did it with the necessary and, usually, with the ready cooperation of their clergy, religious and faithful. Of the many donations made by diocesan families to their diocese, none was more generous than the gift of sons to its priesthood and daughters to its religious orders.

Bernard McQuaid laid strong foundations. While subsequent bishops of Rochester naturally built on these foundations, each also made his own contribution.

Our second bishop, Thomas F. Hickey (1909-28) is remembered especially for organizing Catholic Charities and co-founding the local United Way. Our third bishop, John F. O'Hern (1929-33), paid careful attention to Italian and rural Catholics, and reached out more cordially to citizens of other faiths. Our fourth bishop, Archbishop Edward Mooney (1933-37), served — like Bishop O'Hern — during the disheartening days of the Great Depression. Still he was able to initiate our apostolate to African Americans, and he spoke out in defense of the working man.



File photo
St. Michael Parish in Penn Yan began operating a parochial school in 1883.

The much-loved James E. Kearney, bishop from 1937-66, was happy to witness, at long last, the popular acceptance of the Catholic flock as full-fledged Americans. Politically, that acceptance was symbolized by the election in 1960 of a Catholic president, John F. Kennedy.

But World War II had already done much to bring American Catholics into recognized prominence. Led by their strongly patriotic bishop, Rochester diocesan Catholics had rallied to the worldwide crusade against totalitarianism. After the Allies won the war in 1945, Americans — although long haunted by the nightmares of the "Atomic Age" — could rejoice in the splendid new prosperity that was theirs. The "defense" industry was, of

course, what had brought the Great Depression to an end. But we pondered less the tarnished source of our gains than we did ways to spend them.

In the Diocese of Rochester, as elsewhere, thousands of those who had only dreamed of upward social mobility were now able to afford two cars and a house in expanding suburbia.

That meant, of course, relinquishing the old "immigrant" parishes and the inner-city's nurturing ethnic neighborhoods to the struggling new migrants and immigrants who were arriving in mounting throngs. Furthermore, continuing prosperity seemed to be guaranteed to the new suburbanites. The G.I. Bill of Rights enabled their veteran children to achieve the college educations they could not previously have afford-

ed. A college degree was the best testimonial to our newly acquired middle-class status.

Affluence did not seem to harm the church at first. The faithful responded handsomely to their bishop's call to build fine new churches and schools. As late as 1965, Rochester's seminaries and novitiates housed more aspirants than ever. But that same year marked the Second Vatican Council's conclusion and the beginning of a winter of Catholic malaise that still withstands the spring.

History will surely vindicate the summons of Pope John XXIII to a council that would update the church's pastoral approach to destructive tendencies already appearing in worldwide Catholicism. We are still too close to this remarkable assembly to assess its work completely. However, two present-day opinions about Vatican II must be summarily rejected.

Firstly, some in this diocese, uncritically enthusiastic about the Council, have at times intimated that the Rochester diocese was a "do-nothing diocese" before Vatican II. This is injurious nonsense. Our diocese always has been soundly progressive in its official undertakings, and many of our noblest institutions today date from preconiliar times: for instance, Catholic Charities; the School of the Holy Childhood; the Legion of Mary; the Mother Cabrini Circle; or the Catholic Worker enterprises.

Secondly, others, though understandably jolted by conciliar aftershocks, have called Vatican II itself the cause of the mischief. This, too, is injurious, and the product of tunnel vision. A wider view shows that our contemporary church's problems are closely intertwined with the postwar problems of American and world society.

What St. Paul called "the god of this world" (II Cor 4:4) has enslaved too many minds. Individualism, always endemic in this nation, assumed new virulence in the hedonism of the prosperous 1960s, and engendered lawless violence in the inflationary 1980s. Most chilling of all of its recent manifestations is the undeclared but real war upon children and childhood itself. America the *unbeautiful*? Inevitably, some Catholics — priests, religious, laity — have been more or less tainted by this corrosive egoism and inconstant spirit. Clearly, our movement into the American midstream was an ambiguous achievement.

The recent bishops of Rochester and their peers in Western society have been like physicians faced with an unidentified virus: a disease to cure with no sure-fire remedy.

Thus, Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen (1966-69) proclaimed the ideals of Vatican II but found their implementation a

Continued on page 7

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