Most common questions answered

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

In my pastoral rounds over the years, I have found that many people whom I meet are curious about our diocese – its history, size, personnel and programs. I enjoy such conversations and find that such inquiries about facts and figures often fold into conversations about our faith, our church and our journey of faith.

I thought I would share with you in the form of a quiz some of the questions I have received most frequently. Perhaps the answers to this quiz will satisfy some of your curiosities and help you to respond to questions you may receive from friends and neighbors.

1. When was the Diocese of Rochester founded? And who was its first bishop?

Our diocese was founded in 1868. Our first bishop was Bernard J. McQuaid, who served until his death in 1909. His 41-year term as bishop is the longest in our history.

2. How much territory is included within our diocese?

Our diocese includes 12 counties. They are Cayuga, Chemung, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins, Wayne and Yates. We cover about 7,100 square miles.

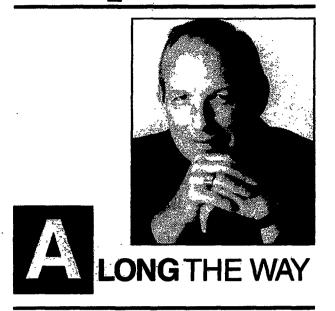
3. How many Catholics are there in our diocese?

Of the 1.45 million people who live in our 12-county area approximately 397,000 (27 percent) are Catholic.

4. How many parishes are there in our diocese?

At the present time we have 149 parishes.

5. And how many men and women religious now live and work in our



diocese?

We are blessed by the presence of 837 women religious and 136 men religious. Of the men, 51 are brothers and 85 are priests.

5. How many diocesan priests do we have at the present time?

We have 301 diocesan priests. Of that number 192 engage in full-time, active ministry within the diocese. Six serve in ministries outside of our diocese. The remainder are retired. All of the retired priests continue to serve, and a large number of them do so in active parish ministry.

6. How many seminarians do we have, and where do they study?

We have nine seminarians at the present time. In today's usage, that means that we have nine students who have finished college and have gone on to major seminaries for their theological studies. This time of formation normally includes four years of study and one year of pastoral service in one of our parishes. The student does his year of pastoral service between his second and third years of theological studies.

At present we have seminarians at Theological College at the Catholic University of America; North American College, Rome; Saint Mary's Seminary, Baltimore; Saint Augustine's Seminary, Toronto; and St. Bernard's Institute.

7. What about permanent deacons?

The number of our permanent deacons has grown to 90 since our first ordination more than 10 years ago.

8. How many Catholic schools do we have now? And how many students do they serve?

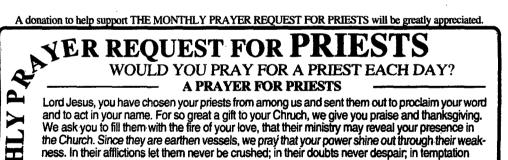
The seven Catholic high schools located in our diocese serve 3,200 students. Our 56 elementary schools serve another 11,400 young people.

9. How does the Diocese of Rochester compare in size and population to the other dioceses of New York state?

There are eight dioceses in the State of New York: Albany, Brooklyn, Buffalo, Archdiocese of New York, Ogdensburg, Rochester, Rockville Center and Syracuse.

The three downstate dioceses – Brooklyn, New York and Rockville Center – all have Catholic populations well in excess of 1.5 million. New York is the largest both in population and area. Geographically, Brooklyn is the smallest diocese in the state.

Of the five upstate dioceses, Ogdensburg is the largest in area and the smallest in population. Of the four lying along the broad East-to-West midsection of our state, Buffalo is the largest in Catholic population. Albany, Rochester and Syracuse are all roughly the same in both size and population, with Albany slightly larger in each category.





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