

Books, Music & Video

Archivist updates his 1968 diocesan history

By Lee Strong
Associate editor

IRONDEQUOIT — It is said that those who fail to remember the past are condemned to repeat it.

Father Robert McNamara has spent his career remembering the past, but he is still "condemned" to repeat it — literally.

The 88-year old diocesan archivist is currently reading proofs for the *The Diocese of Rochester in America: 1868-1993*. The book is an emended and expanded version of his critically acclaimed but out-of-print 1968 history, *The Diocese of Rochester: 1868-1968*.

The new book includes the text of the old, with some corrections, plus approximately 60 pages of new material covering the last three bishops of Rochester: the last years of the bishopric of Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen; the full term of Bishop Joseph L. Hogan; and the first 14 years of Bishop Matthew H. Clark's tenure in Rochester. The new book ends with the promulgation of the goals of the 1993 Synod.

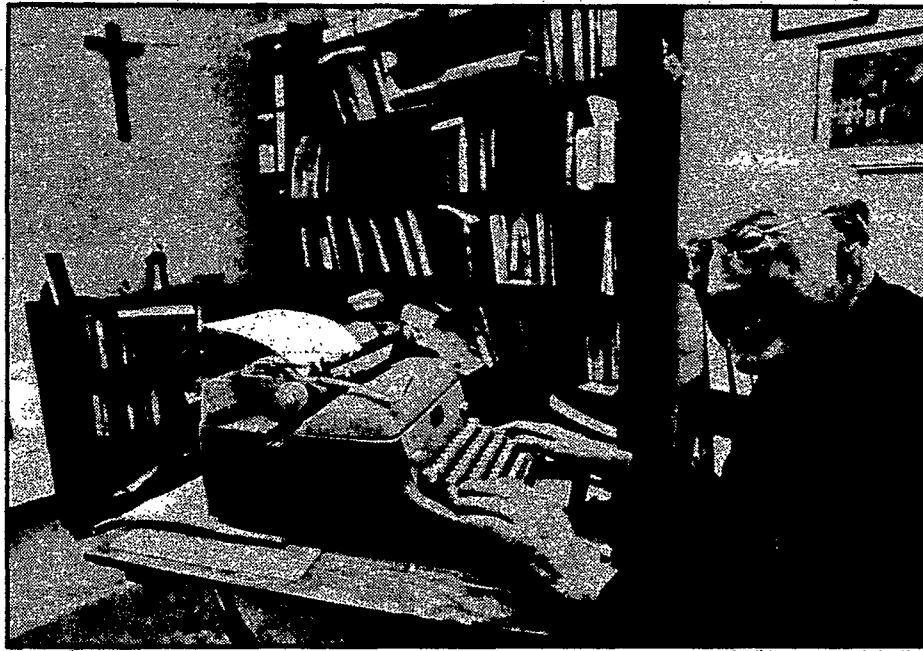
"It's really pretty much reportage for the more recent bishops," Father McNamara said modestly. "I think it will stand on its own two feet as a review of what's gone on."

Updating the history was not something he had planned, he acknowledged. But the diocesan director of archives and records, Father William Graf, urged him to do so.

"There have been copies asked for, and Father Graf told me about three years ago we ought to put out a second edition," Father McNamara said. "I've been sweating it out for three years."

Part of the challenge was that physical infirmities have made it harder to get out to do research, Father McNamara noted.

But, he added, Father Graf and Nazareth College Public Relations Director Kathleen



Greg Francis/Staff photographer

Father Robert McNamara at St. Thomas the Apostle rectory, Rochester, where he relied on a manual typewriter to produce his updated diocesan history, *The Diocese of Rochester in America: 1868-1993*.

Urbanic assisted with business and proof-reading details; St. John Fisher College Professor Nathan Kollar made available interviews he'd taped with Bishop Hogan for the bishop's memoirs; and James Johnston, who graduated from Fisher this year, did a lot of the legwork to gather documents.

In the added sections, Father McNamara observed, "I tried as much as possible to talk about each bishop, to allude to as much as possible, keeping in mind that two of them are still alive."

He noted that his earlier book had left off just at the beginning of the implementation of the Second Vatican Council in the diocese. The new edition attempts to point

out some effects of the the council.

He acknowledged that he did not get into the depth that he would have liked, but noted that because he had not anticipated returning to the history, he had not kept the detailed notes he would have liked. His assumption, he said, was that "somebody else would take over and do volume two."

Still, he was happy to add to what he'd already done and to make sure that the new edition had continuity of style and content.

"If I have any particular gift, I think it's in coordinating, assembling facts and trying to put them in a logical form," he said.

That gift was recognized when his first history received multiple favorable reviews. The book came at a time when the writ-

ing of objective diocesan histories was only beginning, he explained. Robert Trisco, in a review in the April 1972 *The Catholic Historical Review*, took note of this.

"Father McNamara has set a high standard for (other historians) to meet, and he has shown other dioceses that lack histories of their own what an essential aid to self-understanding they are missing," he wrote.

Father McNamara agreed that as an historian his task has been to provide people with aids to self-understanding.

"Keep the record and pass it on to the people of today and tomorrow so they will know where they come from and what they owe to those who've gone before," he said.

Even as he was working on the updated history, he has been busy on other "record-keeping" projects. He continued to update his 1993 book, *Ambassadors for Christ - A Rochester Diocesan Clergy Necrology: 1818-1993*; he compiled an updated list of St. Bernard's Seminary alumni, where he taught for many years; he has produced a weekly column on saints lives called "Saints Alive," currently being published in a number of diocesan parish bulletins; and he has written historical articles for periodicals.

"It's been my salvation to be occupied," he said. "My wits have been kept pretty clear. I just thank God for the strength and the clearness of mind to undertake something like (the updated diocesan history)."

But while his wits were still working fine, his beloved manual typewriter — which had been given to him as a gift in 1958 — typed its last keystroke two years ago. Father McNamara tried a computer, but found it too frustrating. So a request went out for a donated manual. Six arrived, enabling him to finish the updated history.

"If they still continue to manufacture the ribbons, then I can survive, I think," he quipped.

Diocesan Catholics release works

• **Roslyn A. Karaban**, a professor of ministry studies at St. Bernard's Institute, published *Responding to God's Call: A Survival Guide* through Resource Publications Inc. The book examines how to discern what God wants one to do, and how to respond to that call — or how to deal with circumstances that prevent one from responding.

• **Father Robert Kennedy**, a professor of liturgical studies at St. Bernard's Institute, edited *Reconciling Embrace: Foundations for the Future of Sacramental Reconciliation*. Published by Liturgical Training Publications of Chicago, the book includes seven papers presented at the April 1995 North American Forum on the Catechumenate, as well as notes written by Father Kennedy for pastoral reflection after each report.

• **Judith Kollar**, director of continuing education at St. Bernard's Institute, has published *A User-Friendly Parish: Becoming a More Welcoming Community*, through Twenty-Third Publications. In it, she explores some of the elements that affect the way a parish functions and the way it is perceived by parishioners and non-parishioners.

• **John Leary**, a member of Holy Name of Jesus Parish, Greece, released volumes IX and X of *Prepare for the Great Tribulation and the Era of Peace* through Queenship Publishing Company, Santa Barbara, Calif. The books contain daily messages he reportedly receives through prayer.

• **Karen Malzeke-McDonald**, a member of the Corning-Painted Post Roman Catholic Community, illustrated *Charlie Dog Two and Mustard*, a book aimed at 5-through 10-year-olds. Published by Brunswick Publishing Corporation of Lawrenceville, Va., the book is about a young puppy who is a "master trickster."

• **Glenn McClure**, a Geneseo-based musician, released "St. Francis in the Americas: a Caribbean Mass," through McClure Productions Inc., Geneseo. The Mass sets some of the words of St. Francis into a variety of languages — including Italian, Spanish and Latin — and musical styles of the

New World, and features such instruments as steel drums and the hammer dulcimer.

• **Marvin Mich**, currently on leave from St. Bernard's Institute, published *Catholic Social Teaching and Movements* through Twenty-Third Publications. The book explores the social justice movements in the last century in light of Catholic social teachings.

• **St Mary's Choir** of St. Mary's Church, Auburn, has released a compact disc, "The Bells of St. Mary's: Ave Maria and Other Favorites," featuring 21 songs including "Ave Maria" and "On Eagle's Wings." The choir is directed by David Correll, the organist is Muriel Hickey and the cantor is Darwin Parker. The discs are available through the parish.

• **Bob Schwartz**, a teacher and administrator at McQuaid Jesuit High School, released a collection of original songs on the compact disc, "Long Time Comin'." The disc is available through Schwartz.

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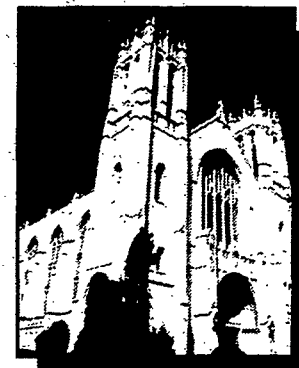
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