

Milestone celebrations abound

The wonderful celebration of the 350th anniversary of the founding of the Sisters of St. Joseph held at Sacred Heart Cathedral last Sunday was the first of several similar gatherings this week. Three were parish celebrations of the anniversaries of their respective establishments. Another was a birthday celebration for a great priest who, I am sure, knows more about the history of the parishes of this diocese than anyone else.

On Friday evening, the parish community of St. Dominic celebrated the 100th anniversary of the dedication of their church by Bishop Bernard J. McQuaid, the first bishop of the Diocese of Rochester. The parish joined to that event the blessing of their new ambry, the place where they will keep the oils used for the celebration of the sacraments. A parishioner, Tony Muscolino, made the ambry. I was honored that Tony and Elaine Muscolino served as miter and crosier bearers during the celebration. In a spirit typical of parish life, there was an invitation to gather in the parish center for good food and the opportunity to extend the joy of the evening.

On Saturday St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Greece celebrated their patronal feast day and the 75th anniversary of their foundation by Bishop Thomas Hickey, the second bishop of Rochester. In the early 1920s Leo Lawson and George Pearson, two laymen from Greece, went to the bishop to ask that he establish a parish in the

along
the way



BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

area. Bishop Hickey said that he would, if Lawson and Pearson could garner the interest of 70 potential parish families in support of their request.

They returned to report that 72 families were interested and they went on from there. Parish records indicate that the first parish Mass was celebrated in the Pearson home on Sunday, November 6, 1925. That first Sunday offering totaled \$32.28. At a warm parish reception following the liturgy, highlights of parish's history were beautifully recalled in photos, artifacts, mementos and, especially in the conversations of participating parishioners.

On Sunday I joined the community of Immaculate Conception Parish in the Corn Hill section of Rochester. Of the three parishes that celebrated special anniversaries this weekend, Immaculate Conception is the oldest. All year long they have thanked God for 150 years of graced life since their beginnings in 1850 under Bishop John Timon of the Diocese of

Buffalo. (You may recall that we were a part of the Diocese of Buffalo until our own diocese was established in 1868.) Of special joy on Sunday was the moment when we rededicated the church after the community had done some repair and significant renovation.

At the age of 90, Father Robert McNamara, priest of the Diocese of Rochester and distinguished historian, is older than St. Charles Borromeo parish but much younger than the parishes of St. Dominic and the Immaculate Conception! In fact, those who know Father Robert, myself included, stand in awe of his youthful spirit. The passage of the years has in no way diminished his intellectual curiosity, his spirit of generous service or his care about the history of our diocese or its parishes.

On Friday Father Bob Bradler, pastor of St. Thomas the Apostle where Father Robert lives, hosted a birthday party honoring our beloved nonagenarian. In attendance were many of his colleagues and former students from St. Bernard's Seminary. I am deeply grateful to Father McNamara for the witness of faith and generous service he has offered through all of the years of his priestly ministry. I am grateful as well for his body of historical work; and for his consistent, gentle encouragement to keep good records and quality archives for those who come after us.

Peace to all.



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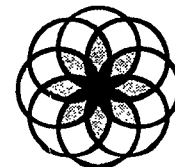
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