Msgr. O'Connor, Chautauqua County Catholic Dean, Dead

Special to The Buffalo Evening News

SILVER CREEK, Nov. 5—The Rt. Rev. Msgr. Edmund J. O'Connor, PA, VF, dean of Chautauqua County, died Wednesday in Mercy Hospital, Buffalo, where he had been ill for several weeks. He was 88.

Pastor of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church in Silver Creek 47 years, Msgr. O'Connor was beloved by people in Western New York and all over the nation.

In 1957 he celebrated his 50th anniversary of his ordination. The Most Rev. Joseph A. Burke, bishop of Buffalo, presided at a banquet in his honor.

A graduate of the famed North American College in Rome, Msgr. O'Connor numbered many members of the church hierarchy among his close friends.

Ordained May 26, 1907

Msgr. O'Connor was born Sept. 2, 1871 in Guelph, Ont. He attended Holy Cross College in Worcester, Mass., and was graduated from Canisius College, Buffalo. From there he went to Rome to study for his theology degree.

He celebrated his first Mass at St. Peter's Tomb in Rome after his ordination on May 26, 1907. Returning to Buffalo, Msgr. O'Connor became an assistant at Blessed Sacrament Chapel, which now stands next to St. Joseph's Cathedral.

He held this post for five years until May 1912 when he was assigned to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in Silver Creek.

Several legends are told about his talents. Msgr. O'Connor and another American are said to have designed the first golf course in Rome.

Congenial Personality

Another time, he is said to have floated a church down a stream near Silver Creek when its site was changed.

A congenial personality, Msgr. O'Connor also had the reputation of getting things done with a missionary's zeal.

It was in his parish that the Columban Fathers decided to set up a rectory and retreat house. Over the years he counseled and befriended the Columban Fathers and they shared the burdens and joys of many tasks together.

When Msgr. O'Connor went to Silver Creek, his church was a small frame structure. Later it was moved to its present site in Central Ave. But the present church, a 13th Century Gothic style stone building, was erected in 1932. A parish school was added in 1950 and a second floor was dedicated in 1957.

MSGR. EDMUND J. O'CONNOR

Made Prelate in 1952

Msgr. O'Connor was appointed a monsignor Nov. 25, 1942. And on June 5 this year His Holiness Pope John XXIII elevated him to prothonotary apostolic, the top rank a monsignor can achieve. Since June 1956 he had been a diocesan consultor, one of a special group of advisers to the bishop.

Msgr. O'Connor for years was a member of the Chautauqua County Tuberculosis Society.

He is survived by three sisters, Mrs. Anna Speck and Mrs. Agnes Dickinson, both of Buffalo, and Miss Vera O'Connor of Silver Creek.

A Solemn Requiem High Mass will be celebrated tomorrow morning at 11 o'clock in Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church for parishioners and school children. Saturday morning at 10:30 a Solemn Funeral Mass will be celebrated in the church by the Most Rev. Joseph A. Burke, bishop of the Buffalo Diocese. Burial will be in Mt. Carmel Cemetery.

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