

MOST REV. PIUS A. BENINCASA, D.D.
July 8, 1913 – August 12, 1986

We Remember . . .

The Most Reverend Pius A. Benincasa was born in Niagara Falls on July 8, 1913. He attended St. Joseph's School there until his family moved to Buffalo. In 1926 he began his studies for the priesthood in Buffalo at the Little Seminary of St. Joseph and the Little Flower, and graduated in 1931.

He completed his education in Rome at the Pontifical Institute for the Propagation of the Faith and was ordained at St. John Lateran Basilica on March 27, 1937 at the age of 23.

His first priestly assignment was as assistant pastor at Holy Cross parish in Buffalo where he worked for six years. During his spare time he worked with other Catholic organizations.

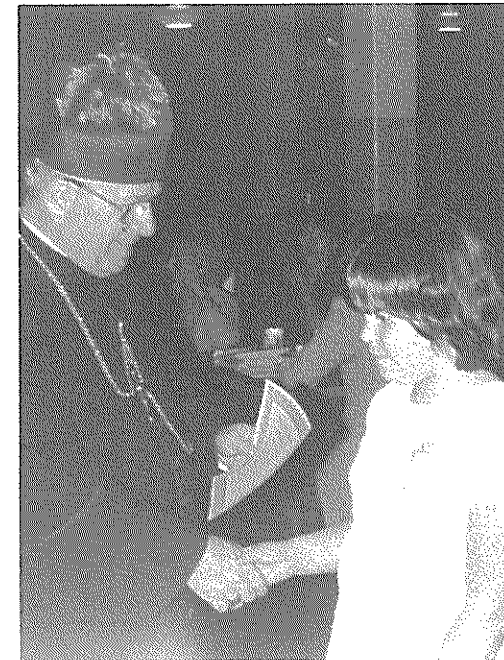
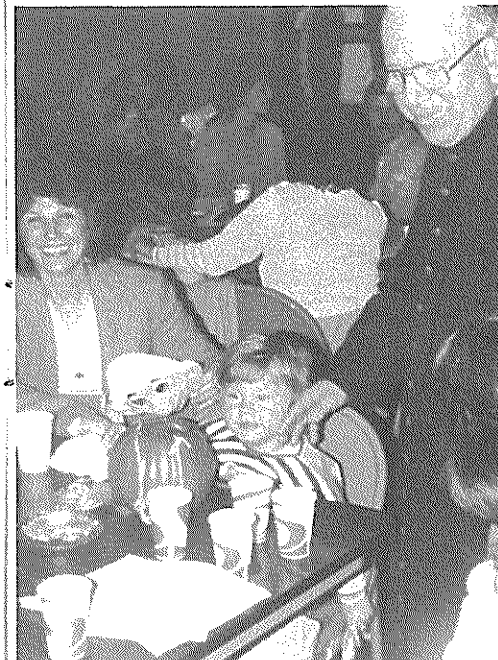
In 1943, Father Benincasa volunteered for military service as a chaplain and went from training courses at Harvard University and with the Eleventh Armored Division to the North African and European combat theaters with the Fifth and Seventh Armies.

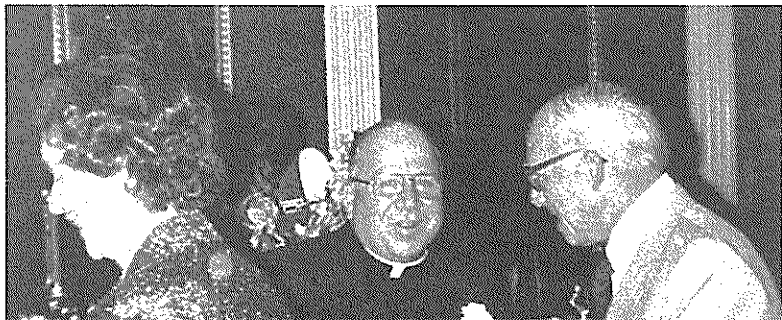
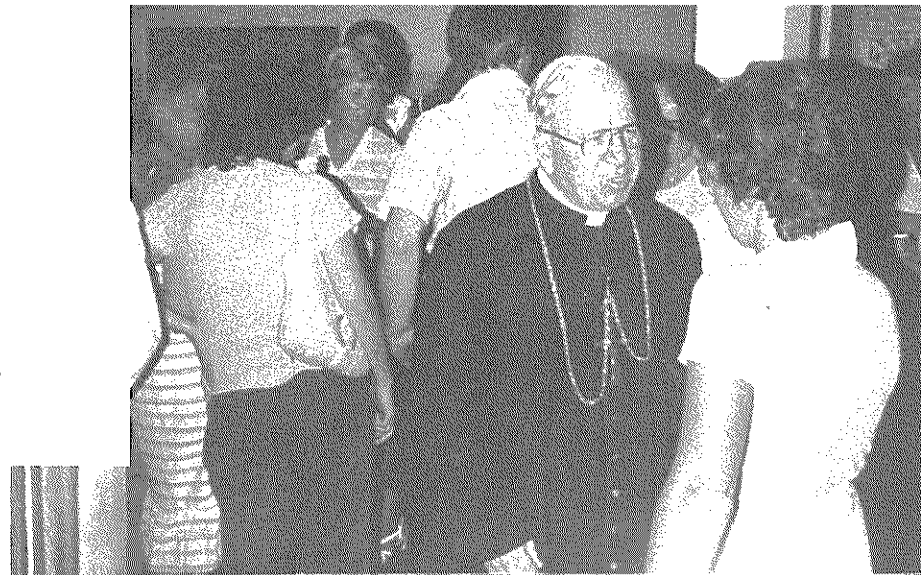
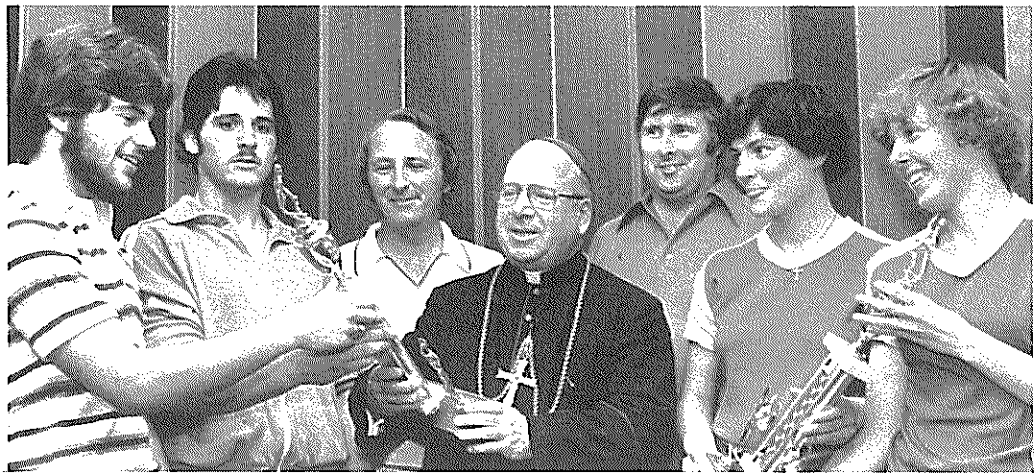
Following his military service in 1946, he studied canon law in Rome before returning to Buffalo for assignment to the Marriage Tribunal and parochial work as a weekend assistant at St. Andrew's Church in Kenmore, N.Y. He returned to Rome in 1950 and earned a doctorate degree in canon law as well as a degree in sacred theology.

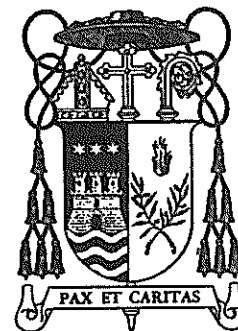
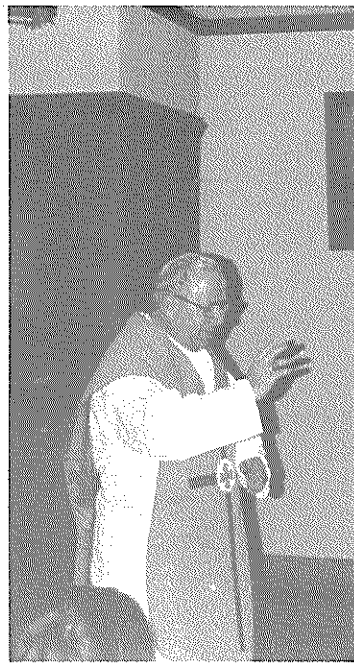
He returned to Buffalo in 1952 and served as a judge at the Tribunal as well as fulfilling parochial responsibilities at St. Thomas Aquinas Church in Buffalo. He was honored with the title of Papal Chamberlain to His Holiness, Pope Pius XII in 1953. For a short time in 1954, Msgr. Benincasa was named Administrator of Sacred Heart Church, Bowmansville. In 1955, he was appointed to the Secretariat of State at the Vatican, a position which he held for ten years. As the first Buffalo priest to hold such a position, Msgr. Benincasa was deeply involved in the Secretariat's diplomatic work.

In 1958 he was appointed a domestic prelate. In 1964 Pope Paul VI appointed Msgr. Benincasa as Buffalo's third Auxiliary Bishop with the titular see of Buruni. He was consecrated along with Bishop Stanislaus J. Brzana at St. Joseph's New Cathedral by Bishop James A. McNulty as principal consecrator.

Along with his diocesan duties, Bishop Benincasa was pastor of Holy Name Church, Buffalo until he was appointed pastor of St. Aloysius Church, Cheektowaga in March, 1965. In July, 1983 Bishop Benincasa accepted additional responsibilities for the pastoral care of Immaculate Heart Church, Buffalo. In 1984 Bishop Head appointed him to the new College of Consultors.







Bishop Benincasa's Coat of Arms

Blazon

The Shield of Bishop Benincasa's coat of arms is divided into two sections but both stem from his family heritage. Dexter: stars, castle and water. Sinister: flame and crossed olive branches. Motto: "Pax et Caritas."

Significance

The name Benincasa comes from the Latin "bene in casa." A free translation states "all is well in the house." The castle represents the house of Benincasa and the moving waters signify the purposefulness that has been with the family since the earliest ancestors.

The three gold stars represent three ancestors: St. Catherine of Siena, Blessed Ursulla Benincasa and Ven. Benincasa Benincasa.

St. Catherine's father, Jacopo, had 25 children. She lived from 1347 to 1380 and was a tertiary in the Order of St. Dominic and had an avid interest in the works of St. Paul the Apostle. "Pax et Caritas" was St. Paul's motto.

Blessed Ursulla Benincasa founded the Oblate Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, now known as the Theatine Nuns. It was she who introduced the wearing of the blue scapular of the Immaculate Conception.

Ven. Benincasa Benincasa is represented by the third star. He was a member of the Mendicant Order of Servites, now known as the Servite Fathers. He lived in the 15th century.

The olive branches symbolize peace and the red flame signifies peace and charity.

The motto, "Pax et Caritas," is translated "Peace and love." A motto briefly expresses an ideal of the one who selects it.

The external ornaments are composed of the pontifical hat with six tassels on each side, a Bishop's mitre, processional cross and crosier. The hat and tassels are done in green while the mitre, cross and crosier are in gold.

These are the presently accepted heraldic trappings of a prelate of the rank of Bishop. Before 1870, the pontifical hat was worn at solemn conclaves held in conjunction with Papal functions. The color of the pontifical hat and the number and color of the tassels were signs of the rank of a prelate, a custom which is still preserved in ecclesiastical heraldry.

