

Bishop Patrick Sheridan, retired New York auxiliary, dies at 89

NEW YORK - Auxiliary Bishop Patrick J. Sheridan, a retired vicar general and one of the best-known and most popular priests in the New York Archdiocese, died Dec. 2. He was 89.

Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan of New York was scheduled to offer the funeral Mass at 10:30 a.m. Dec. 7 in St. Patrick's Cathedral. Burial was to be in Calvary Cemetery, Queens.

Bishop Sheridan, who was named vicar general by Cardinal John J. O'Connor, held numerous pastoral and administrative positions in the archdiocese in his 64 years of priesthood - accepting each of them enthusiastically.

Bishop Sheridan had worked closely with Cardinal O'Connor since 1985, when the cardinal appointed him vicar for religious. With his appointment in 1987 as vicar general, he became Cardinal O'Connor's chief deputy and liaison between the cardinal and his regional vicars and heads of major departments. He was appointed an auxiliary bishop by Pope John Paul II and was ordained to the episcopate by Cardinal O'Connor in 1990.

In an interview with Catholic New York, archdiocesan newspaper, in 2001, the year his resignation was accepted, he said, "In the training we received as seminarians, the entire focus was on the people in the parish setting.

"You were trained to render service there, to preach, to teach, to sanctify. Any of the other specialties came later, as a part of your priesthood. But everything was established on the concept of service to the people in the parishes," he said.

Cardinal Edward M. Egan, the now-retired archbishop of New York who renewed Bishop Sheridan's appointment as vicar general soon after becoming archbishop, told Catholic New York in a 2001 interview, "It is no exaggeration to describe Bishop Sheridan as one of the most gifted and dedicated clergymen in the history of the archdiocese."

Cardinal Egan added at that time that Bishop Sheridan knew "every facet of the life of the archdiocese" through his many assignments and positions of service.

In 1995, he played a key part in the planning for the visit of Pope John Paul II to New York and blessed Central Park's Great Lawn as the stage was being erected for the Mass.

In 1993, he was named chancellor of the seminary system. He oversaw new faculty appointments, a reform of the curriculum and the institution of the year of spirituality before students began theological studies. Upon his appointment, he told the seminarians that they were preparing for a "joy-filled, demanding, challenging life."

Earlier, in 1956, he joined the New York Apostolate Mission Band - a group of priests who toured the archdiocese conducting missions - and was named leader of the group in 1965. In an interview in 1990, he called this assignment "the greatest experience in the world." In that interview, he told Catholic New York that the mission band's priests at that time were among the first to bring the documents of the Second Vatican Council to parishes in the archdiocese. He was named a monsignor in 1965.

He taught for a year at Cardinal Hayes High School in the Bronx. He served as episcopal vicar of Central Westchester and pastor of St. Joseph's in Bronxville, 1980-1985. He was episcopal vicar of the Northeast Bronx in the 1970s and was

pastor of Holy Rosary. His first assignment as pastor was at Blessed Sacrament in Manhattan, starting in 1967.

Born in Manhattan to a family of seven children, he grew up in Holy Name of Jesus Parish on the West Side. He studied at Cathedral Prep and Cathedral College before entering St. Joseph's Seminary in Dunwoodie. He was ordained in 1947. After ordination, he was assigned for six months to St. James the Apostle Parish in Carmel, before beginning studies for a master's degree in education at the University of Chicago.

He served a summer assignment at Holy Name Parish in New Rochelle in 1948, then returned to Chicago to finish his degree. In 1949, he was assigned as a parochial vicar at Our Lady of Victory Parish in Manhattan and in 1956 served briefly at Corpus Christi, also in Manhattan, before joining the mission band.

Bishop Sheridan was honored with the Catholic Home Bureau's Humanitarian Award in 1998 for his priestly presence as educator, pastor and administrator. He received the Medal of Life Award from Pius XII Youth and Family Services in 1999 for his value and concern for human life as an inspiration to others.

He was a member of the Knights of the Holy Sepulcher and the Knights of Malta.