

When the President Died...

Catholics of the Rochester Diocese, like Americans everywhere, turned to their churches when news of President Kennedy's assassination flashed to the world Friday afternoon.

Mass at Sacred Heart Cathedral was offered for the dead President late that same afternoon.

OFFICIAL diocesan mourning for the President was held yesterday, Thanksgiving Day, at the Cathedral. Bishop Kearney offered the Mass and spoke. It was the day President Kennedy had asked Americans to go to church to thank God for his "glorious gift." The thanks were voiced indeed but with tears.

(Text of the Bishop's talk will be in next week's Courier.)

On the day of the President's funeral, every parish church

was filled with devout throngs to pray the same words Cardinal Cushing later used at the Requiem Mass in the Washington cathedral.

Typical of many similar services was this scene at Corpus Christi Church where Monsignor John E. Maney, vicar general and chancellor of the Diocese, offered solemn Mass and prayers for President Kennedy.

At a community memorial service in downtown Rochester, Father Benedict Ehmanna spoke as snow pelted the city.

At Sunday Masses, most priests spoke on the heritage of courage and faith given the nation by President Kennedy.

In his sermon Sunday morning, Monsignor Maney said, "We have lost a great and good man. Our nation has lost its father, our commander-in-chief. America has lost a great and good man who dedicated his life to the ideals of freedom and justice for all men all over the earth."

And now he has been slain and has died a martyr's death. He takes his honored place among America's greatest heroes who have given their lives for their country. "Greater love than this no man hath that a man lay down his life for his friends."

It is only natural for the anguished cry of a crushed humanity to go up before the throne of God: "Why, O Lord, why?" We shall perhaps never know the answer to that question this side of the grave. It is not for us to question the decrees of the Almighty. Rather we bow our heads and murmur through our tears the words which Christ our Lord taught us to say, "Thy will be done."

Our heartfelt prayers, our

deepest love and sympathy go out to his beloved family, his dear wife, his little children, his father and mother, brothers and sisters. We recognize in them the family traditions that have made America great. John Fitzgerald Kennedy was true to those traditions. He was a good husband, a devoted father and he loved his family. He made every American proud of America's First Family.

The charity of our prayers will even include the miserable assassin who committed this outrageous crime. We leave his final judgment to God. Who are we to judge? Christ speaks to us from His Cross. "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Let us not indulge in thoughts or acts of hatred or vengeance. God's justice will be exercised here below through legally constituted authority. And the final judgment by the Almighty will be sufficient for this man.

However tragic this bitter hour, we cannot give way to despair or sorrow at those who have no hope. We must reaffirm our faith in God, in His justice, His mercy, His providence over all His creatures. From this horrible evil, He will do good. His holy angels will sustain us. His might will lead us on to the vision of truth and righteousness, of justice, freedom and peace for which John Fitzgerald Kennedy gave his life.

Let us console ourselves with the words of the Apostle Paul. "Behold I tell you a mystery we shall all indeed rise... in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall rise incorruptible and we shall be changed. For this corruptible body must put on incorruption, and this mortal body must put on immortality. But when this mortal body puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the word that is written, 'Death it swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O death, where is thy sting?' But thanks be to God who has given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 15, 51-57).

Post office employees numbering 400 and headed by Postmaster John G. Bittner and including the carriers in their gray uniforms assembled at St. Joseph's Church at noon Monday. Rev. Joseph C. Wnioczek, CSSR, celebrated Requiem and conducted services at a requiem in the main aisle. Four hundred other persons assisted at the Mass.

In a niche in the wall surrounding St. Joseph's Church a drawing of President Kennedy by Norman Rockwell appears over a missal opened to the prayers for the dead.



Bishops Say of President Kennedy 'Ever The Good Steward'

Rome —(NC)—The Catholic bishops of the United States described President John F. Kennedy as "ever the good steward," and expressed the hope that "his death in the service of his ideals" may "rally this generation to the triumph of peace and justice and freedom for all."

The bishops spoke in a joint statement, issued in Rome where they are taking part in the second session of the Second Vatican Council. They said his death was "shocking" news, and that it "deprives mankind of a compassionate champion of peace and brotherhood."

THE TEXT of the bishops' statement follows:

"In this hour of common sorrow of our nation, we join with all our fellow citizens and persons of goodwill throughout the world in expressing our heartfelt condolences on the tragic death of the President to Mrs. Kennedy and to their children to his devoted parents and all the members of the family. His shocking death deprives mankind of a compassionate champion of peace and brotherhood, his country of a courageous executive, his family of a loyal husband and father, his parents of a dutiful and devoted son."

"Endowed with extraordinary talents and a great measure of this world's goods, he was ever the good steward, never forgetting that these gifts were entrusted by God to his care for the benefit of his neighbor. He described his own life when he uttered his famous appeal, 'Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.'"

"His vision of duty was not limited to his country, even though he had given almost to the last full measure of devotion in its defense. He was no less mindful of the place of his country in the family of na-

to the triumph of peace with justice and freedom for all.

"May the good God Who endowed an inspired him grant our prayers and those of all his fellow citizens and friends for the repose of his soul in the company of his Creator and Redeemer."

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