

Msgr. Baroni Dies, Urban Affairs Expert

Washington (NC) -- Msgr. Geno C. Baroni, 53, a specialist in urban ethnic affairs and the first Catholic priest named assistant secretary in a cabinet-level U.S. government agency, died Aug. 27 in Washington.

Msgr. Baroni had a rare form of abdominal cancer, diagnosed in 1981. He had been hospitalized for several months prior to his death at Providence Hospital.

Msgr. Baroni served as assistant secretary for Housing and Urban Development during the Carter administration, working from 1977 to 1980 with neighborhood groups and helping them establish joint partnerships with the private and public sectors for revitalization. "This," he once said, "requires a 1980s approach of more organizing and less hell-raising."

Before joining the Carter administration, Msgr. Baroni, the son of an immigrant coal miner, had plenty of experience struggling on the outside of the establish-

ment to preserve urban neighborhoods and to protect civil rights and ethnic identity.

He was described as a "pesky gadfly" by The New York Times in 1977 because of his persistent efforts to save the Italian, Polish, Irish and other ethnic neighborhoods which once enlivened American cities.

He had come to Washington from western Pennsylvania in 1960 to study at The Catholic University of America. As an assistant pastor at the inner-city parish of Sts. Paul and Augustine, he soon became involved in fighting poverty, improving inner-city life and defusing interracial tensions.

He walked on picket lines and joined the 1963 March on Washington, led by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

Msgr. Baroni became director of program development for the U.S. Catholic Conference Task Force on Urban Problems in 1970. While with the USCC, he was one of those responsible for

developing the concept for the Campaign for Human Development, the U.S. bishops' anti-poverty program.

In 1971 he founded the National Center for Urban Ethnic Affairs, an affiliate of the USCC, and was a board member of national civic and religious organizations devoted to urban, racial, ethnic, community and public interest concerns.

As president of the urban ethnic affairs center, Msgr. Baroni pushed for laws aimed at reducing "redlining," the denial of mortgages to a particular neighborhood.

The American Revolution Bicentennial Administration in 1975 named Msgr. Baroni to its national Advisory Committee on Racial, Ethnic and Native American Participation in the Bicentennial.

When Carter left office in early 1981, Msgr. Baroni was named a special assistant for community affairs to Archbishop James A. Hickey of Washington.

Education the Key, Black Catholics Told

New Orleans (NC) -- Education is the key to the future strength of the nation, the community and the family, speakers stressed at the National Office for Black Catholics biennial conference.

In his keynote address, Norman Francis, president of Xavier University, asked "If the nation is at risk because of an educational crisis for the majority population -- what must that mean to us? It is essential for our futures, black and white, that this nation have a strong educational system."

He emphasized the importance of the family in educating pre-school children and praised the black Catholic family for "its wealth of strength."

Francis also asked the 126 participants to support public education because the bulk of our black children attend public schools.

Noting the high enrollment of blacks and Hispanics in public schools, he said, "Do not let school systems die on the vine, because the grapes that will rot will be black and brown."

In another speech, James McConduit, president of NOBC, urged members to work to keep parochial schools open in inner cities to ensure higher-quality education for elementary school children.

Workshops covering blacks in parish life, ministry and education were scattered among the speeches at the Aug. 8-11 conference.

Father Rollins Lambert of the U.S. Catholic Conference Department of Social Development and World Peace said in one workshop that "religion cannot be separated from the other parts of our lives," and he urged people to register and vote.

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Priesthood Was Central To Cardinal Shehan

Baltimore (NC) -- The priesthood was "the central fact" of his life for retired Cardinal Lawrence Shehan who was a leader in social justice, ecumenism and education. The cardinal died Aug. 26 at age 86.

In his autobiography, "A Blessing of Years," published in 1982, the cardinal said, "In the end I believe I shall be judged primarily as a priest."

A Baltimore native, he was ordained in 1922 and became a cardinal in 1965. He served as archbishop of Baltimore from 1961 to 1974. As a young priest he was assigned to Washington when it was part of the Baltimore Archdiocese. He was an auxiliary

bishop in Baltimore and the first bishop of Bridgeport, Conn.

As archbishop of Baltimore, he became known for his stand on racial justice and for his ecumenical breakthroughs. He had an international reputation for ecumenical activities and represented Pope Paul VI at a meeting with Orthodox Patriarch Athenagoras in Istanbul, Turkey, in 1965 in which mutual excommunications of Catholic and Orthodox churches were withdrawn after 900 years.

He was papal legate at the Eucharistic Congress in Melbourne, Australia, in 1973, which he said was "the greatest honor ever accorded me in my life." He also said it was "an enviable way to end my career in the service of the church."

In 1963 he published a controversial pastoral letter condemning prejudice, saying, "We have an essential duty in justice to recognize and respect equally the rights of all men." He was among churchmen taking part in the March on Washington which thrust Dr. Martin Luther King into national prominence.

In 1962 Archbishop Shehan established a local Commission for Christian Unity. Along with a similar group founded in Europe, it was a first in the world.

Cardinal Shehan's retirement years were active ones.

In 1983 he accepted a one-year term as chairman of the board of directors of the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, which since Vatican II has researched and studied a variety of church-related issues.

Known for his ecumenical breakthroughs, Cardinal Shehan addressed Episcopal and Jewish clergy and initiated discussions between U.S. Catholics and Lutherans. He represented Pope Paul at the 1965 meeting with Patriarch Athenagoras, which resulted in the mutual withdrawal of excommunications by Catholic and Orthodox churches.

In 1971, at a time when few

U.S. bishops had spoken against the Vietnam War, Cardinal Shehan wrote a pastoral letter referring to the war as "a cancerous growth in the vital parts of our nation" and called for an end to the "uncontrolled violence and senseless wholesale destruction of human life and moral values."

Cardinal Shehan, a product of Catholic schools, was episcopal chairman of the National Catholic Welfare Conference and president general of the National Catholic Educational Association. He supported the Catholic school system and urged the Kennedy administration in 1962 to include Catholic schools in proposed massive federal aid for education.

Another issue of concern to the cardinal was abortion. In 1970 when the Maryland legislature was considering repeal of laws against abortion, the cardinal said such action could lead to "grave social consequences." Three years later the U.S. Supreme Court struck down most state restrictions against abortion. In a case similar to the Baby Doe situation of 1980s, Cardinal Shehan joined Cardinal Patrick O'Boyle of Washington in 1971 in protesting the death of a newborn mongoloid child whose parents would not give permission for a simple operation to remove a stomach blockage.

In 1966 the cardinal clashed with a priest in the Baltimore archdiocese who had been ordered to disassociate himself from a movement challenging liturgical renewal and other reforms of the Second Vatican Council. The priest, Father Gommar DePauw of the Catholic Traditionalist Movement, had his priestly faculties revoked.

Holy Family

The Rosary Society of Holy Family Parish will meet 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 12 in the Pine Room. New members will be welcomed.

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Radiography Students Graduate

Hornell -- Four students of the St. James Mercy Hospital School of Radiography received diplomas at graduation following a buffet dinner, Friday, Aug. 24, at the Hornell Country Club.

Ann Schwenzer of Dansville received the Outstanding Student Award, given by the school to the student with the highest cumulative average. The award, a plaque, was presented by Patrick Rogers, school director.

Karen Aini of Hornell was given a crystal pendant from the radiology staff as "the best all-around student who exemplifies the profession of radiologic technology." Anne Konopa, radiology department head, made the presentation.

Also graduating were Ann Tobin and Kalvin Shaw of Hornell.

Father Jeremiah Moynihan, hospital chaplain, gave the invocation. Sister Mary Rene McNiff, hospital administrator, and Spencer Crow, president of the board of directors, congratulated the graduates. Dr. Edward Auringer, medical director of the school and the radiology department, presented the diplomas.

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