

# Cancer claims nation's leading black bishop

ATLANTA (CNS) — Archbishop James P. Lyke of Atlanta, the U.S. Catholic Church's only active black archbishop, died at home Dec. 27 after a two-year battle with cancer. He was 53.

Cardinal James A. Hickey of Washington, D.C., celebrated the Dec. 31 funeral Mass for Archbishop Lyke at Atlanta's Cathedral of Christ the King.

Archbishop Lyke was a leader in the civil-rights and pro-life movements, and in African-American cultural and liturgical development. He wrote numerous articles in national publications on black Catholic issues in America.

His death reduces the number of active U.S. black Catholic bishops to 11.

Beverly Carroll, head of the U.S. bishops' Secretariat for Black Catholics, called him "a giant in the African-American Catholic movement."

"He was certainly one of the most prophetic leaders I have ever met," she said. "He had such a passion for the



Archbishop James Patterson Lyke, OFM, died Dec. 27, 1992.

Catholic tradition."

When he was made an auxiliary bishop of Cleveland in 1979 at the age of 40, he was the youngest bishop in the country, only the fifth U.S. black bishop, and — a Chicago native — the first Northern black to become a bishop.

In the early 1980s he played a key role in organizing the black bishops to work together on national issues of common concern. In 1984 he coordinated their writing and issuance of "What We Have Seen and Heard."

The first-ever joint pastoral letter by the 10 black bishops, it proclaimed the richness of the black Catholic heritage in America, but called racism in the church a festering wound that remains a major obstacle to the evangelization of blacks.

He was thrust into the international spotlight in August, 1990, just three weeks after being named administrator of the Atlanta archdiocese, when it became known that his predecessor,

Archbishop Eugene A. Marino, who had recently resigned, had been engaged in a two-year affair with a young woman, Vicki Long.

Bishop Lyke launched a thorough, independent investigation into financial questions raised by the scandal, and his openness was credited with restoring trust in the church in the archdiocese.

Doctors operated on Bishop Lyke in January, 1991, to remove a cancerous kidney. In April, 1991 — nearly 10 months after he had become administrator of the Atlanta archdiocese — Pope John Paul II appointed him archbishop.

Last April doctors found inoperable cancer in his right lung. In November, as the cancer worsened he sought out hospice care in his home.

Carroll said Archbishop Lyke's single most important legacy to the church is the African-American Catholic hymnal, "Lead Me, Guide Me."

## U.S. bishops see signals of improvement in Somalia

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Starving Somalis are being fed and the U.S. Marine presence has dramatically cut down the internal violence, according to two U.S. bishops who visited Somalia in the last days of December.

"The care givers are extremely splendid, heroic, impressive people. They're doing extraordinary work," Cardinal Roger M. Mahony of Los Angeles said.

But the needs in Somalia are still extreme, basic social structures are gone and careful planning will be needed to avoid turning the country into a permanent welfare state, he said.

Catholic News Service interviewed Cardinal Mahony by telephone just hours after he returned Dec. 31 to the Vatican Embassy in Nairobi from a three-day visit to Somalia. He had been to Baidoa and other villages that are receiving relief aid from Catholic Relief Services, the U.S. bishops' overseas aid and development agency.

Baltimore Auxiliary Bishop John H. Ricard, a CRS board member, spent Christmas week in Somalia.

"What is amazing is how the people can get by on so little," Bishop Ricard

told *The Catholic Review*, Baltimore archdiocesan newspaper, upon his return.

Bishop Ricard celebrated an open-air Mass Christmas Eve for the U.S. soldiers in Baidoa, then celebrated a special Mass for the CRS staffers who coordinate relief work there.

He visited other villages served by CRS and helped distribute food at feeding stations.

He told troops at a Mass he celebrated that although they lacked holiday trappings, their sacrifice to help brothers and sisters in need halfway around the world "represents the true meaning of Christmas."

Cardinal Mahony said that on a visit to an orphanage, "I was in shock at how the children look. They are extremely malnourished.... I met a 17-year-old boy, I would have said he was only 6 or maybe 7, he was so small and thin."

Bishop Ricard took a three-hour trip in a food convoy to the village of Haval. There, he said, "some 5,000 people, many who had walked for miles, lined up in the hot, blazing sun to wait patiently for food. Everyone was polite, even when the food ran out."

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