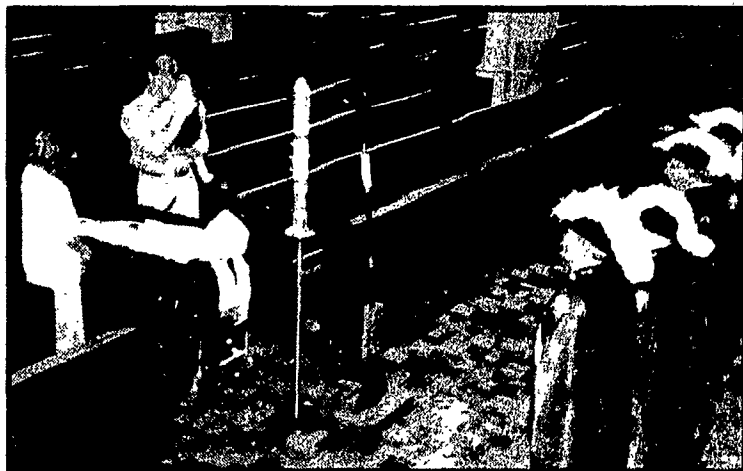




Mike Mergen/Photo Intern

Bishop Matthew H. Clark spends a moment in reflection before Bishop Hickey's funeral Mass in Rochester's Sacred Heart Cathedral Oct. 11.

A bishop is laid to rest



Bill Hawken

Rose and Michael Dugan, along with their daughter Hanah, pay their respects to the late Bishop Hickey before the Oct. 10 prayer vigil at Sacred Heart Cathedral.

ROCHESTER — Retired Auxiliary Bishop Dennis W. Hickey, embraced by the presence of 10 bishops, 140 fellow priests, at least a score of deacons, and about 900 lay people and religious, was commended to God at Sacred Heart Cathedral Oct. 11.

Bishop Hickey, 84, died Oct. 6 from complications of lymphoma of the spleen, diagnosed in May. He had assisted three bishops during his 58 years of service to the church as a priest.

The Mass culminated a two-day farewell to the Dansville native universally described by friends, relatives and acquaintances as a gentle, selfless soul who totally devoted his life to serving the church.

Thousands of people paid their respects Oct. 10, as the bishop's body lay in state during the afternoon and evening at the cathedral. That night, some 700 celebrated a solemn evening prayer vigil, over which Bishop Matthew H. Clark presided.

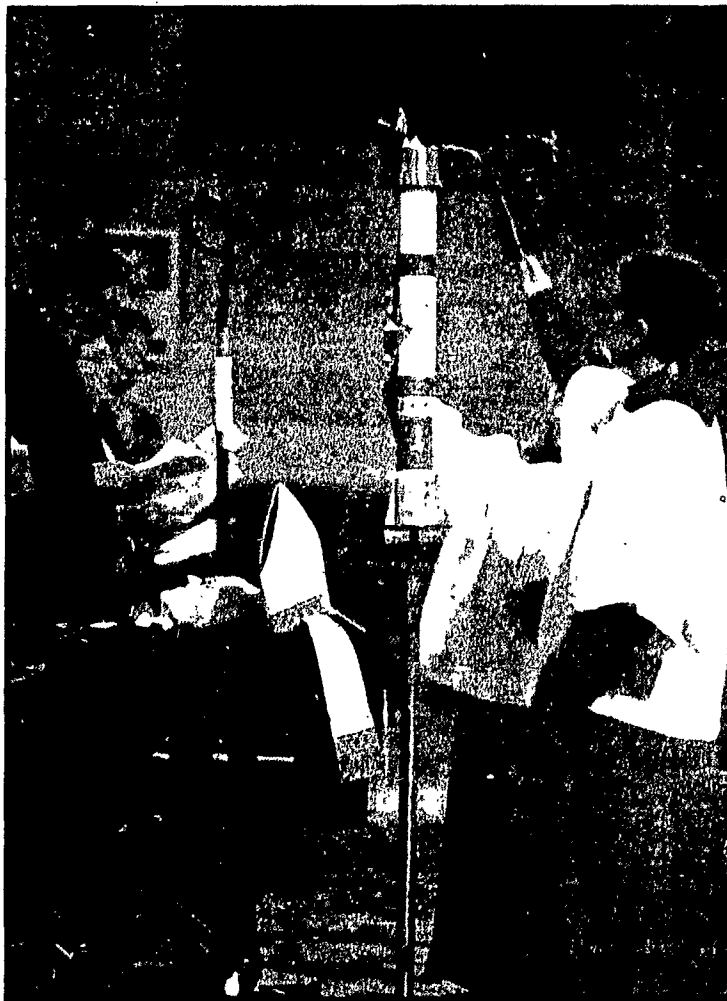
"You can tell by the throngs of people coming into the church how deeply he was loved," remarked Betty Grant, a eucharistic minister at St. Augustine's Church, Rochester.

"Oh, he was a wonderful man and a great individual," said Maurice Culhane, maintenance man at Sacred Heart and a native of Limerick, Ireland. "He had the Irish disposition, of course. He liked to tell stories and hear Irish stories. He was a great humanitarian ... and a great churchman, too."

As members of several Knights of Columbus councils in the diocese took turns guarding Bishop Hickey's body, mourners filed past it, some pausing to touch his hands, which held a rosary.

A 'selfless person'

"By God, aren't we going to miss him?" Bishop Clark asked during his homily at the funeral Mass, calling Bishop Hickey a "master" of



Mike Mergen/Photo Intern

The pascal candle was lit above Bishop Hickey's casket, during the solemn evening prayer vigil Oct. 10.

the art of offering Christ's love to others.

"I think I have never met a more selfless person," Bishop Clark said. "The first-person pronoun he used as sparingly as anyone I have ever met ... Only God knows the sum total of the man's total identification with Christ in his selfless service."

Below the pulpit, Bishop Hickey's dark wooden crozier stood beside a bouquet of roses.

Bishop Clark was the principal presider; his concelebrants included all the priests present, as well as the bishops of New York state dioceses: Joseph L. Hogan, retired bishop of Rochester; Thomas V. Daily, bishop of Brooklyn; Howard J. Hubbard, bishop of Albany;

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I know I speak for myself and quite certainly I speak for many others in the diocese ... in saying that we will miss deeply a very, very good friend and a person in whom we found qualities of Christ.

He was an extraordinary friend. I am deeply indebted to him personally for more kindnesses than I could name.

I think of how totally gracious he was to me when I came to Rochester - he being a seasoned pastoral leader and I being brand new. He really was an excellent teacher without being direct and obvious about it. He just had a way of helping you find good decisions.

In November 1980 - just months after Auxiliary Bishop John McCafferty had died May 2 - Bishop Hickey was taken to the hospital suddenly. As I rushed to the hospital to see him, I remember praying, "Please, Lord, don't take Dennis. Don't take him now."

So it comforts me now to think that I had 19 years of grace since that scare.

Certainly we will all miss this wonderful man and remember stories of his goodness and kindness for many years.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark