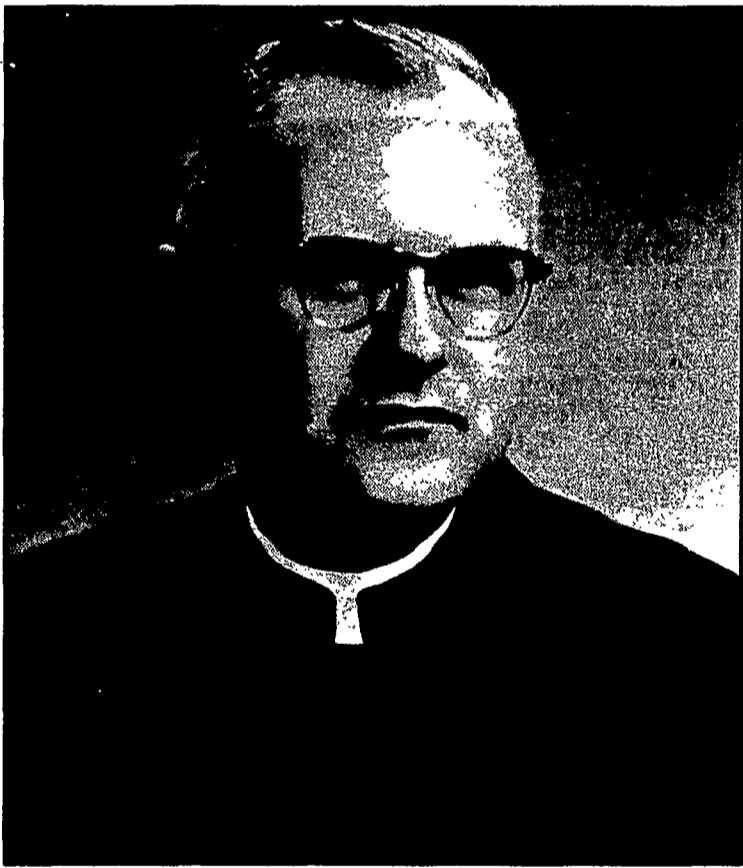




The Senior Sodality of St. Mary's Church, Auburn held a farewell party in November 1946 at Springside Inn, Owasco Lake, for Father Dennis Hickey, former moderator of the Sodality. The Rev. Dr. William E. Cowen, center, was pastor of the church, and Joan Scollan (Powers) was president of the Sodality.



know anything about this building ... would you mind taking that part over?"

Bishop Hickey saw the parish's Sunday Mass attendance double and the school enrollment jump 200 percent during his time there.

His experiences at the parish led to a lifelong devotion to St. Theodore, his niece, Mary Caldwell noted. The bishop always kept a small, carved wooden statue of the saint, which was beside him when he died.

Auxiliary bishop years

Bishop Hickey recalled for the *Courier* in 1996 his appointment to the post of diocesan vicar general. It was January 1967. Msgr. Hickey had been hosting an ecumenical gathering at St. Theodore's rectory when he received a telephone call from Bishop Fulton J. Sheen. Bishop Sheen told him to find someone else to finish hosting the gathering.

So Msgr. Hickey hurried down to Bishop Sheen's residence, where the famous bishop asked him accept the post of vicar general.

"I said, 'I've got to think this over,'" Bishop Hickey recalled. "He said to hurry: 'The television people and reporters are in the next room waiting to interview you.'"

Bishop Sheen had made his selection based on a poll of the diocese's priests, who demonstrated their high regard for Msgr. Hickey.

"The overwhelming favorite of the priests happily corresponded with my own judgment, for he was one of the first priests I visited when I came to the diocese," Bishop Sheen later stated.

In 1968, Bishop Sheen named him an auxiliary bishop, along with the late Bishop John E. McCafferty.

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As a teenager, I worked part-time doing maintenance work at St. Theodore's Church when Bishop Hickey was pastor there. One Saturday morning, he pulled me aside.

He said, "Mike, I've got to tell you something. They've asked me to be a bishop and I don't know if I want to. But since they asked me, I guess I'll do it." I'd never seen him so animated and excited.

I was pastor of Holy Family Church when Bishop Hickey was living

there. He said, "When you were growing up I was your pastor, and now you're my pastor. I like it both ways." He was an absolute joy, the easiest person in the world to live with.

He knew the names of all the dogs in the neighborhood. If the school bus drivers didn't see him out for his daily walk, they'd call the church because they thought something was wrong. He believed in the city, and the importance of the church in the city.

He would get offended if people would suggest he 'move out of that dangerous neighborhood.' It was a neighborhood he belonged to, and wanted to be a part of.

After I left Holy Family, we would go to lunch every Monday afternoon. He was a model for my own vocation. I've told him that many times over the years. He gave me the profound sense that being a priest is a good thing to do.

Father Michael Schramel, pastor, St. Ambrose Church, Rochester



Whatever you said or did, he remembered it. In the middle of an argument he would pull something out: "Don't you remember what you said a couple years ago?"

He had such a wonderful sense of humor. There was never a time you left him without feeling the better for it.

I traveled with him to Rome and Seattle, and we had seven or eight wonderful summers on Cape Cod. A few of us would get together most Friday nights for dinner the last 17 years. All those memories are very precious to me.

He's someone I'll miss for a long, long time.

Father James Slattery, member of Bishop Hickey's ordination class

I remember one big thing. People would never give him money as a gift, because he would always give it away. They would give him excursion tickets, something he'd have to use on himself. If you gave him money, someone else would end up with it.

...When I was doing a Mass with him once after I became a deacon, he said, 'What would you like me to do?' I said, 'No, it's the other way around - what would you like me to do?'

Deacon Charles Dispenza, a parishioner when Bishop Hickey was pastor at St. Theodore's Church in Gates

I liken Bishop Hickey's service under three Rochester bishops to that of Aaron and Hur holding up the arms of Moses as the Israelites battled their enemies.

He would have been Aaron, except he lacked the personal defects.

I think the one thing that shines through is an absolute steady faithfulness.

Father Sebastian A. Falcone, president emeritus of St. Bernard's Institute

He would come in to be a confessor while I was at St. Bernard's Seminary. He'd always have a big line of people who wanted to get his counsel.

When he talked about his prayer life, he would say he began his prayers as soon as he got up in the morning. He was very devoted to his prayer experience.

There was a consistent pattern of goodness to the man, just a consistent pattern of goodness.

Father Michael Conboy, pastor Corning/Painted Post Roman Catholic Community; Bishop Hogan's secretary, 1969-78