

We were probably the closest friends we had of each other. We knew each other since 1936, when we came to St. Bernard's Seminary. We were ordained together in 1941.

In the latter years we've gone out to dinner at least once a week. One of the characteristics about Bishop Hickey was his great respect for the priesthood; he wanted to promote community amongst the priests. He was always encouraging the priests to get together for lunch or dinner.

I will miss going out with him for lunch or dinner. His favorite place, of course, years ago was the Doud Post on Buffalo Road. We'd gone there together about 30 years. First it was he and me. Father Slattery joined us, then Father John Whalen, who has since died.

He was always respected. The confidentiality he had to have in dealing with the other priests. Even though I was so very close to him, he would never talk about other priests or the problems that might have come up about them.

As bishop, when he confirmed he would travel all parts of the diocese. He didn't hesitate to drive all by himself. He did a lot of driving and never seemed to mind it.

When I was pastor of Our Lady of Good Counsel he lived not far from the church, and I invited him to have 8 o'clock Mass every weekday. He enjoyed coming there; he would have at least one grade of children there each day. He loved to talk to them and he enjoyed listening to them. It helped him in the rest of his preaching at least to come down to the children's level. They appreciated him very much.

When they came to be married, they asked him to be the officiating minister. But he said no, he felt he'd be interfering with the pastor. He kept up on all the best sellers. He enjoyed watching "Book Notes." He got me watching that every Sunday night on C-Span. He tried to keep abreast of anything helpful, anything important to the church, the progress of church and the diocese. Anything in general that gave the church a good name or helped its progress, he was very happy and pleased about that.

Father Paul Wohlrab, in residence at St. John the Evangelist, Spencerport



Bishops Matthew H. Clark, Joseph L. Hogan and Dennis W. Hickey celebrate Mass marking Bishop Hickey's 50th jubilee of priestly ordination.

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She reminisced, "He had often come to our place in Fairport — Assumption Convent. He'd come up those stairs as if he were 50. He was so healthy until this happened."

Mary Kay (Conley) Hammond, a parishioner of St. Mary's Church, Dansville, knew Bishop Hickey and his family for 60 years.

"In May, he came to Dansville for lunch," she recalled. "He didn't say anything at the time, and it wasn't until later that you realized he was here for the last time — and he knew it. He wanted to go to all his favorite places that meant anything to him — the train station his dad worked at, Brae Burn golf course. When we'd pass a certain street, he'd say, 'So-and-so lived down there.'"

Sister Mary Fran Wegman, RSM, vice-president of the Sisters of Mercy, oversees the McAuley Residence. She saw Bishop Hickey every day he after he moved into the McAuley center July 10.

He had a constant flow of visitors, primarily priests, she said. "The last couple of months he wasn't able to read much. When he was up to it, he liked to watch 'The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer' in the evening. If he wasn't up to that, he wanted to catch 'Washington Week in Review.' He had me put up a sign saying no visiting from 7-8 because he liked to watch that program. We also had a sign limiting visits to 10 minutes. The reason was, he said 'I get so tired after 10 minutes and really have no more to say.'

"When he was not feeling well, like after a treatment, and he was not able pray the office, Father John Hedges would go in and pray the office with him. It meant so much to him. Father Hedges and Father Elmer Schmidt really looked out for the bishop," Sister Wegman continued, explaining that the two senior priests also live at McAuley. "They'd check him out on a daily basis and sometimes have supper together in the dining room or order a pizza. On occasion, Sylvia (Nagy) would bring in supper and the three would eat



A well-wisher greets Bishop Hickey at his 50th anniversary celebration.

He would have been coming out (to Church of the Assumption, Fairport) this very month, the end of the month, for his birthday. He used to come for his birthday, anniversaries as a bishop and during the year for fun times. We were a support group — Sister Jonathan Schneider, who did a lot of the cooking; Sister Catherine Judge; and Sister Margaret Kunder. Many times Father John Norris would join us; he was over in the parish with us. Some of the stories I probably can't tell you.

We always cooked the same meal — boiled



potatoes, chicken divan, winter squash. We knew what he liked. He'd say, 'Sister, it's better than it ever was.'

When he lived on the third floor of Holy Family, we'd bring blueberry pie

and coffee, and he loved it. He was my pastor when I moved back to St. Thomas More. Every time I met him it was like having a spiritual encounter. When you were in his midst, you were the

He was the sort of person who would not tell you much about himself. All the priests liked him. Maybe his very silence was advantageous in bringing about this popular

opinion. He did not let himself be led easily. He observed, and made his judgment.

When we were getting the book ready last fall (an

update of Father McNamara's history of the diocese) I didn't have a good recent picture of him and asked if he could get me one. He jumped into his car and rushed it over.



together right in his apartment."

Even up to a few days before he died, he continued going to the 11:15 a.m. Mass in the community room down the hall. He celebrated Mass whenever possible.

"He was up sitting in the chair and walking around his apartment till the last day," Sister Wegman said. "He was really determined to keep moving. That was one of the things he really minded — he used to walk two miles a day. He kept saying, 'I need to get back into that.' One of his goals was to get back out driving his car. He still had the car out there."

"Yet he never gave up. He was amazing. He wanted to do whatever he could. He was walking (the day before he died). He said, 'I know I need to keep doing this, to keep my strength up.' He didn't take the long view of what was happening to him. He would take each day and deal with what was in front of him for that day."

Father Paul Wohlrab, Bishop Hickey's health proxy, noted, "When he was sick at McAuley Residence, we were talking one day. I said you are in such a condition now, you don't need pray your breviary every day. He said, 'I know that, but I want to.' He always said when a priest gave up his prayer life or breviary, he began his downfall. He said when a priest left the priesthood it was usually when he gave up saying the breviary.

"And he would never speak about any pain, which made it difficult for the people trying to take care of him," Father Wohlrab added.

Nagy, parishioner at St. Jude's Church, Gates, became a close friend — or as her pastor, Father Steger phrased it, "guardian angel" — to Bishop Hickey, as she had been for the bishop's late sis-

person present. His profound faith in God was so evident in the way he treated you.

Even through his illness he had this incredible wit; there was always this twinkle in his eye when telling a story.

He told us this story. I guess it was when he was under Bishop Fulton Sheen. Sheen asked him to live among the poor. He got to know the neighborhood. Before you knew it they were cutting his grass and trimming the bushes and helping him out ... they were bonding. One night he came home from work and all his electrical appliances

were gone.

So he had an idea and thought he wouldn't call the police. He'd go to the neighbors. He said to them ... maybe if you watch together with me, we will find out who is doing this, as a neighborhood we will take care this ourselves. By the end of the week, all his electrical appliances were on his front porch.

Even though he could afford things, he didn't (buy them).

We loved Bishop Hickey and we always will. His memory will last and will be a loving memory.

Sister Janice Morgan, SSJ, congregational president, Sisters of St. Joseph

He was always a very helpful person.

There were no bumps on the man. He was utterly humble, in the best definition of being humble.

He was definitely a servant, in the supreme sense.

Father Robert F. McNamara, diocesan historian