

# Nation remembers slain president

Maureen Boyle/CNS

WASHINGTON — Four decades ago, royalty, heads of state and important government officials filled the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle in Washington for the funeral Mass of President John F. Kennedy, who was assassinated on Nov. 22, 1963.

Forty years later almost 800 everyday Catholics from across the region gathered at the cathedral to pray for and remember the slain president, who was the first Catholic to be elected to that office.

They prayed during a Mass of remembrance offered on the anniversary day of President Kennedy's tragic death.

In his homily, Father J. Bryan Hehir, outgoing president of Catholic Charities USA, said the Mass was "a time to reflect and to pray (in the place where) President Kennedy was entrusted into the hands of God for eternity."

Msgr. W. Ronald Jameson, rector of St. Matthew's, was the main celebrant. Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., President Kennedy's youngest brother, and the senator's wife, Victoria, were also in attendance.

Father Hehir described President Kennedy as a leader who sought "to



Members of the Kennedy family pray as U.S. Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., lays a flower at the gravesite of his brother, President John F. Kennedy, at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va., Nov. 22.

Reuters/CNS

change the world in which he lived."

"He expanded people's sense of possibility and responsibility. ... He captured people's imagination, interest and raised their hopes," the priest said.

The music for the Mass included Schubert's "Ave Maria," which was performed at the president's funeral. A musical prelude featured English composer Herbert Howells' "Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing," which was written in commemoration of the president's death and premiered in 1964 at the Washington National Cathedral.

Earlier in the day, Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick of Washing-

ton led a private prayer service for members of the Kennedy family at the Arlington National Cemetery grave site of the slain president.

Attending that service were Sen. Kennedy; President Kennedy's daughter, Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg, with her husband and children; and Ethel Kennedy, widow of another brother, the late Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, who was assassinated in 1968.

Following the evening Mass many attendees stopped to view the marker in front of St. Matthew's main altar that memorializes the spot where President Kennedy's casket was placed during his funeral Mass.

John Whelan, a longtime parishioner at St. Matthew, said he wanted to attend the anniversary Mass to honor and pray for the late president.

A former employee of National Geographic magazine, Whelan said he can vividly recall the funeral's events.

"I will never forget it as long as I live," he told the *Catholic Standard*, newspaper of the Washington Archdiocese. "I remember standing along Seventh Street. There were thousands of people watching the procession and you didn't hear a sound. There was utter silence."

Ron Linton, a former staff member in the Kennedy administration who also attended the Mass, said the 40th anniversary of the president's death "is no more important than the 39th or 41st, but what is important is to pray and to remember what he was, what he did and what we lost."

## Dirt-dump deal done

The City of Rochester reached an agreement last week with Most Precious Blood Parish, Interfaith Action and residents of a west-side neighborhood on a revised plan to dump what Interfaith Action has termed "contaminated" soil in a former neighborhood landfill.

Interfaith Action, a federation of churches, businesses and organizations, announced the agreement in a Nov. 19 press release. According to Interfaith, the agreement calls for the city to hire Haley & Aldrich, an independent environmental-testing company, to monitor air, soil and water quality during the dumping and to report the results to a resident-led oversight team and the residents.

Interfaith said the oversight team comprises city and neighborhood representatives who will monitor the dumping process. Father Gary Tynan, pastor of Most Precious Blood, is among those serving on the team. Haley & Aldrich, working with the oversight team, will have the power to stop the dumping-and-sifting operation if air and soil quality limits

are exceeded, Interfaith said.

The city also agreed to give Most Precious Blood and the neighborhood residents "timely advance notice" if any other dumping is proposed for the landfill. Interfaith also said the city's Department of Environmental Services will work with the parish and residents to determine and fund alternative uses for the site. The city also agreed to monitor traffic around the site.

Edward Doherty, commissioner of environmental services for the city, previously stated that the soil has been found not hazardous. However, Interfaith Action has led neighbors to fight the dumping plan, citing concerns over air and noise pollution created by the dumping process.

The soil originated in a parking-lot renovation project in Charlotte, but was mistakenly dumped in the Town of Greece. The city plans to dump it in a former landfill, which is located behind a school sports field, and a lot in which school buses are routinely parked.

— Rob Cullivan

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