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OBITUARIES

Irish-Born Msgr. O'Toole Shepherded Three Parishes

March 15, 2017

A Mass of Christian Burial for Msgr. Patrick Fursey O'Toole, a former pastor of three Brooklyn parishes, was celebrated March 13 at St. Patrick's Church, Bay Ridge.

He died March 8 at NYU Medical Center, Manhattan, after a sustained illness. He was 80.

Born in Claran, County Galway, Ireland, he studied at Claran National School; St. Jarlath's College, Tuam; and All Hallows Seminary, Dublin.

He was ordained for the Diocese of Brooklyn on June 19, 1960 in the chapel at All Hallows Seminary by Archbishop Scanlon.

He served as an associate at St. Saviour's, Park Slope, 1960-75, and St. Kevin's, Flushing, 1975-78.

In 1978, he was named pastor of St. Ann's, Front St., in the DUMBO section of Brooklyn.

He became pastor of St. Patrick's, Bay Ridge, in 1988, and served there until 2004.

From 2004 to 2008, he was pastor at St. Cecilia's, Greenpoint, and then retired from active duty.

He had been living in Florida, and assisting during the summer months at Our Lady Queen of Martyrs parish in Forest Hills.

Msgr. O'Toole also served as a chaplain at the Brooklyn House of Detention, and as liaison to the Catholic Charismatic Movement. He was named a monsignor in 1986.

Auxiliary Bishop Paul Sanchez was the main celebrant. Special concelebrants included Msgrs. David Cassato, Jamie Gigantiello, Guy Massie and Fathers Gerard Sauer, Francis Passenant, Cosme Fernandes and Martin Kull, who preached the homily.

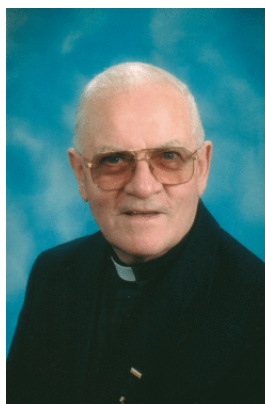
"I have always enjoyed trying to figure out what makes people tick," said Father Kull. "When I first came to St. Patrick's, I had never met Msgr. O'Toole but wanted to know what motivated him and why he made certain decisions. What was behind it all was the Eucharist. The celebration of Mass was what he lived for.

"Holy Week is not an easy time for most priests because there is just so much that has to be done. Msgr. O'Toole came alive. He thrived during this time because it was the celebration of Mass. One year during the Easter Vigil, 'Alleluia' was being played to end the Mass, and even though it was going on over two hours, monsignor stood up and said to the choir, 'Play it one more time.'

"He loved to say 'Alive in the Spirit.' This was because he had complete confidence and even when scared about making a difficult decision he knew the Spirit was with him and would overcome the fear. That was the way he lived his life every single day with courage because the Spirit was with him."

Among the immediate survivors was his brother Joseph of Galway.

Burial was in Ireland.



Msgr. O'Toole

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