

# Father O'Donnell, former pastor of Holy Trinity, dies

Obituary 7/29/95

Father Robert J. O'Donnell, pastor of Holy Trinity Church from 1989 until February of this year, died July 29 in Honolulu after a long illness. He was 55 and a priest for 29 years.

Bishop Francis X. DiLorenzo celebrated a funeral Mass Aug. 4 at Holy Trinity Church. He was interred the next day at Hawaiian Memorial Park in Kaneohe.

Father O'Donnell was born on June 24, 1940, in Helena, Mont. He was ordained for the Diocese of Helena in June 1966, after earning a master's degree in religious education from the Catholic University of America.

In the first six years of his priesthood, he was a theology teacher and administrator in high schools in Butte and Helena, Montana. In 1970 he received a master's degree in Educational Administration from Fordham University in New York.

In 1972, Father O'Donnell was named co-pastor of the Cathedral of St. Helena and in 1977 was assigned as coordinator of the cathedral.

He was appointed executive editor of the Westmont Word of the Diocese of Helena in 1979 and served in that position until 1981.

While chancellor, in May 1983, he was named pastor of St. Mary's Parish.

In 1985 he took a year's sabbatical and in June 1986 came to Honolulu as associate pastor, followed by an assignment in July 1987 as an associate at St. Anthony Church, Kailua, Oahu.

In 1989, Father O'Donnell was assigned as pastor of Holy Trinity Church in Kuliouou, Oahu.



Father Robert J. O'Donnell

During his nine years with the Diocese of Honolulu, Father O'Donnell also served on the diocesan Board of Education, was chairman of the presbyteral council, the bishop's primary priest advisory group, and acted as the advocate for priests, a kind of ombudsman for diocesan clergy.

He also served the diocese by teaching, directing retreats and workshops.

As pastor of Holy Trinity, he led the parish in its battle with the state to keep the church and school safe and accessible when the highway in front of the parish was being widened.

Failing health caused Father O'Donnell to retire from active ministry in February. It was a decision he told parishioners in a letter that was the "most difficult" he had to make during his priesthood.

"Many thanks for your support, love and affirmation," he wrote "Pray for me and be assured of my prayers for you."

Father O'Donnell is survived by his brother Father Thomas O'Donnell, pastor of Risen Christ Church in Kalispell, Montana, in the Diocese of Helena.