

'The Saint of Bleecker Street' Monsignor Charles Brennan dies

WAPPINGERS FALLS — The Rev. Monsignor Charles B. Brennan, pastor emeritus of St. Mary's Church, died Monday at St. Agnes Hospital in White Plains. He was 75.

Monsignor Brennan came to the church in 1965 from his native New York City, where his first assignment was as assistant director of the Holy Name Center for Homeless Men. He later became the director of the center, where he was known as "The Saint of Bleecker Street" for his tireless work with the homeless and destitute men of the city's Lower East Side.

Monsignor's other assignments include assistant pastor of St. Brendan's Church in the Bronx, assistant pastor of the Church of the Incarnation in Manhattan, pastor of the Church of Our Lady of Loreto, Manhattan. He was named director of the Archdiocesan Union of the Holy Name Society in January 1955.

From November 1942 until June 1946, he served as chaplain of the United States Infantry, 25th Division, in the Philippines Campaign and the Occupational Forces in Japan. He was Division Chaplain of the 42nd Infantry Division, New York Army National Guard and retired with the rank of colonel.

Since he came to St. Mary's he has overseen the building of a new rectory, comforted the sick and became a member and chaplain of the Knights of Columbus.

Rev. Joseph W. Hickey, who is now pastor of St. Mary's Church, recalls Brennan as an "outstanding priest."

Village Mayor J. Donald Synnett said, "He was a very dedicated man to St. Mary's and to the community.



Rev. Monsignor Charles Brennan died Monday in White Plains.

He had a great feeling and big heart for children and he helped a lot of families out."

As school principal, Sister Gregory worked with Brennan for the past 20 years. "He especially loved children and they in turn loved him."

"His life was characterized by loving service, those are the first two words that pop into my mind, loving service," Sister Gregory said.

Sgt. William J. McCord of the Wappingers Falls Police Department said, "He was always available for people." Brennan, who served as police chaplain, was called upon by police to help people coping with tragedy, McCord said.

Monsignor Brennan graduated from Epiphany Parochial School in

1924. He went on to complete studies for the priesthood at Cathedral College in 1930 and St. Joseph's Seminary in 1936.

On June 6, 1936, the Monsignor was ordained to the priesthood in St. Patrick's Cathedral by Cardinal Patrick Hayes. On June 8, 1986, his friends and family celebrated his 50th anniversary as a priest in a special jubilee at St. Mary's.

He was born in New York City April 4, 1911, the son of John and Katherine Meehan Brennan.

Monsignor Brennan is survived by a sister, Anna Brennan of Denville, N.J. and two nieces.

Monsignor Brennan's body will lie in state in St. Mary's Church, Clinton Street, Wappingers Falls, today from 2 to 9 p.m. and Wednesday from 11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. A prayer service will be held today at 3 p.m. and a rosary service will be at 8 p.m.

A Mass attended by St. Mary's school children, faculty and friends will be Wednesday at 10 a.m.

At 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, a Mass of the Eucharist will be celebrated by the Most Rev. Anthony F. Mestice, Vicar of Dutchess County. Homilist at the service will be the Rev. Monsignor Walter L. Schroder.

Thursday at 11 a.m. a funeral Mass will be celebrated by Cardinal John O'Connor. Homilist will be the Rev. Monsignor William B. Smith, S.T.D.

The Knights of Columbus Wappingers Assembly No. 1646 will stand an honor guard tonight and Wednesday evenings and Thursday morning.

Burial will be in St. Raymond's Cemetery, the Bronx.

Arrangements are under the direction of the Roberts & Straub Funeral Home, Wappingers Falls.