

Rev. Pechulis, Catholic Priest, Dies Suddenly

The Rev. Justin Paul Pechulis of 97 Haywood St., Catholic priest and pastor at St. Lawrence Roman Catholic Church, died unexpectedly Thursday at the church rectory. He was 53.

A native of Wilkes Barre, Pa., he was the son of Cyprian and Marie Klebon Pechulis. He was a graduate of Seton Hall College in S. Orange, N.J.; St. Charles Seminary in Philadelphia, and held a master's degree from Catholic University in Washington, D.C.

He was ordained to the Priesthood on May 15, 1958, at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church in Winston-Salem by the Most Rev. Vincent S.

Waters, Bishop of Raleigh.

Father Pechulis had served as pastor of St. Lawrence Catholic Church since 1977. Before coming to Asheville, his pastorates were at St. Catherine's in Tarboro, N.C., St. John's in North Wilkesboro, and St. Peter's in Charlotte. His previous assignments were as assistant pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Newton Grove, N.C., Our Lady of the Assumption in Charlotte, and Infant of Prague Parish in Jacksonville, N.C.

He served as president and was a member of the board of governors of the International Toastmasters for a number of years.

He is survived by a sister, Regina Gallen of Maplewood, N.J., and several nieces and nephews.

Reception of the body will be in St. Lawrence at 6 p.m. Sunday. The Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 2 p.m. Monday by the Most Reverend Michael J. Begley, DD, Bishop of the Diocese of Charlotte. Knights of Columbus will serve as honor guards and pallbearers. Burial will be held Thursday in the Gate of Heaven Cemetery in East Hanover, N.J.

Memorials may be made to St. Lawrence Catholic Church.

Williams Funeral Service is in charge of arrangements.