

Father Boyle dies; was pastor at St. Teresa's

By D. SCOTT FAUBEL
Staff Writer

The Rev. Gerald Anthony Boyle, the 11th pastor of St. Teresa of Avila Roman Catholic Church, North Tarrytown, died Wednesday at the church rectory. He was 53 and had been the spiritual leader at St. Teresa's since 1974.

The pastor had been treated for cancer for two years and had undergone cobalt therapy Tuesday.

Cardinal Terence Cooke will be the principal celebrant Saturday morning at a Mass of Christian Burial to begin at 10 a.m. at St. Teresa's.

Father Boyle had been a champion of young people and the elderly while heading the 800-member parish and was an outspoken opponent of capital punishment.

The Rev. Gerald Vander Hart, pastor of the First Reformed Church in North Tarrytown, was a close friend of Father Boyle. "I really appreciated him," Vander Hart said. "He was a person you could relate to."

Vander Hart and Father Boyle also came together in the village on interfaith matters but, said Vander Hart, "The interfaith work was important, but on a personal level I was much closer to him."

North Tarrytown Trustee Peter Soriano, a communicant at St. Teresa's, described Father Boyle as "a man of deep courage" in dealing with his ongoing bout with cancer.

Father Boyle, Soriano said, worked very hard with the young people of the parish when he first came to St. Teresa in 1974. He also reached out to the elderly and minority members of the congregation, Soriano said.

"He was a priest for all people, he led the whole flock," Soriano said. On his death, Soriano said, "I lost my confessor and my real good friend."

The pastor had described himself as a "brick and mortar priest."

He came to St. Teresa when the church was experiencing administration difficulties and within three years began a \$90,000 restoration job. That work started in 1977 to com-



Rev. Gerald A. Boyle

Continued from page one

came known in the parish as a champion of young people and the elderly.

Because the crowd far outnumbered the seats in the large Beekman Avenue church, more than 200 people were forced to stand for the mass, which lasted one hour and 15 minutes. They lined the sides of the church and stood in the back, spilling out the door and onto the front steps.

From a loft in the back of the church, the children's choir led the congregation in song.

"Isn't it wonderful," declared the Rev. O'Leary in his eulogy of Boyle. "The nice things that happen upon the death of a good person. How lucky we are."

The mourners were a mixture of men dressed in dark suits and women wearing light sweaters to guard against the morning breeze of an otherwise perfect April day. In the back of the church children stood next to their parents, some dressed in jackets and ties or dresses, others wearing jeans and summer shirts and holding baseball caps in their hands.

O'Leary, who was a seminary classmate of Boyle's, remembered Boyle as a "very accepting and loving person," a serious and incurably curious man who approached life as "a very complex but very simple thing."

"At times he was a brooding Irishman. Other times the laughter of God would rumble out of him," said O'Leary.

O'Leary, noting the large turnout, explained that he and everyone else

was there because they were part of the "crowd of people who think we are Jerry Boyle's only and best friend, because that's the kind of guy he was."

"He always wanted to find out more, he was always reading another book or checking someone else's notes or looking for the latest thing written on the subject," said O'Leary.

While he saw his role partly as that of a teacher, said O'Leary, Boyle also saw himself "as part of a religion of comfort."

"He was always identifying with his people. He was with them in the hospitals, with the old people, counseling the young on marriage. He wanted people to see him as someone who could help them hope, help lead them to a better life."

Being a Christian — imitating Christ — is something difficult to define, said O'Leary. "But I can recognize it when I see it. I saw it in someone who made organized religion relevant, who made caring for people something that makes sense. Jerry Boyle was as close to that as anyone I know."

Cardinal Cooke said what he remembered most about Boyle was his "beautiful smile, his beautiful communication of love."

"The love of the Father is without end, it endures forever," said the Archbishop. "The love of Jerry Boyle was that kind of love. You could always count on it."

When the service ended, the Archbishop and other clergy filed outside, led by two bagpipers. They were met by an honor guard of the North Tarrytown Volunteer Fire Department.



Staff photo by Arny DiLaura

Cardinal Terence Cooke celebrates Mass for Rev. Gerald Boyle Saturday