

Father Edwin J. Kenny

Port Jervis pastor dies a week before 53rd birthday

By TRICIA GALLAGHER

Father Edwin J. Kenny, pastor of Most Sacred Heart Church in Port Jervis, suffered a heart attack in the rectory and died at Mercy Hospital Dec. 11, just one week short of his 53rd birthday.

A Mass of Christian Burial was offered Dec. 14. Auxiliary Bishop Austin B. Vaughan, episcopal vicar of Orange County, was the principal concelebrant. The homilist was Father Robert Brucato, associate pastor of St. Gabriel's in the Bronx and Father Kenny's classmate at Dunwoodie.

"He was a spark—a bit of freshness, especially in his liturgies," said Father Brucato. "He put a lot of effort and music into each liturgy, regardless of how small a congregation might be."

Father Kenny, who was born in Manhattan, was ordained in 1957. He served as an associate pastor at Sacred Heart in Mt. Vernon from 1957 to 1959 and from 1981 until his appointment to Port Jervis in 1982. In the interim, he was associate pastor at St. Mary's in Poughkeepsie from 1959 to 1970, and at St. Margaret's, Pearl River, from 1973 to 1980. He also served brief assignments at St. Joseph's, Kingston; St. Adalbert's and St. Teresa's, Staten Island; St. Joseph's, Millbrook; St. Malachy's, Manhattan, and St. Mary's, Washingtonville.

Father Kenny assisted the chaplains at the nearby Otisville Federal Correctional Facility during his year as pastor of Sacred Heart.

A parish memorial Mass was celebrated on Dec. 13, with Bishop Vaughan as the principal concelebrant. Father Albert DeLuca of the Archdiocesan Marriage Tribunal, also a classmate, delivered the homily.



Father
Kenny

"I must say in all honesty that I have never seen Father Kenny happier in his whole life than as pastor of Sacred Heart here at Port Jervis," Father DeLuca told the congregation. "His great ambition was to be a pastor of a family-oriented parish. "When I spoke to him last week, he was so elated over the number of people who came to try out for the choir—elated because it was something very close to his heart, the liturgy."

Pat Galligan, secretary at Sacred Heart rectory, who spent a large part of last year introducing Father Kenny to parishioners, said the pastor quickly became an important part of the community.

"There is deep sorrow and sadness here right now," she said. "He touched so many lives and brought so many people together—since he came this community was the most complete family it had ever been. And he's still with us, at least spiritually."

"He told me just last week that his first year in his little country parish had been all he had ever hoped for," she added.

Father Kenny began his studies for

the priesthood with the Carmelite Fathers at St. Albert's Minor Seminary in Middletown. He later transferred to Cathedral College and St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie.

"He was affectionately referred to as 'the monk' by his (Dunwoodie) classmates because of his Carmelite affiliation," said Father DeLuca in a homily which was rich in warm and personal recollections of Father Kenny.

"I can recall in our deacon year how we dared to buy portable radios at Getty Square in Yonkers on our free day—a no-no at that time—so that he could listen to the Dodger baseball games and I the 'Make Believe Ballroom' on WNEW," Father DeLuca told the congregation.

"Father Kenny had a great affinity with the youth and it was not an uncommon sight to see his car jam-packed with teenagers, going to play baseball and have ice cream at the local Dairy Queen."

Father DeLuca said his friend had not taken vacation or a day off since his appointment to Sacred Heart. "Last month, I finally prevailed upon him to take some time off for five days and I forced his hand by making the plane reservations. He reluctantly agreed to this much-needed, short vacation but insisted he had to be back on time for the evening Mass on Saturday.

"I just picked up the plane tickets last week," said Father DeLuca.

Father Kenny is survived by a stepbrother, Raymond Legac of Manhattan.

Interment was at Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Hawthorne.