



Reverend Richard J. Hopkins

May 26, 1919 - August 22, 2017

Rev. Richard J. Hopkins, 98, died on August 22, 2017, in San Diego, California. He was an active priest of the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings for 45 years, retiring in 1989, and he continued to serve in retirement, dividing his pastoral service between California and eastern Montana.

Father Hopkins was born in Billings, Mont., on May 26, 1919, the son of Arthur H. Hopkins and Florentine (Weidenkoff) Hopkins. He received his elementary schooling at Fratt Memorial School in Billings, graduating in 1933. The Ursuline Academy and St. Mary's Institute (graduating in 1937), both in Great Falls, provided his secondary education.

He went to Mount Angel Seminary College in St. Benedict, Ore. (graduating in 1941 with a B.A. degree), and completed his theological studies at St. Edward Sulpician Seminary of the Northwest in Kenmore, Wash., with an M.Div. degree in 1944. Father Hopkins was ordained to the priesthood by the Most Rev. William J. Condon, Bishop of Great Falls, on June 3, 1944, at St. Ann Cathedral in Great Falls.

Father Hopkins began his priestly ministry at St. Patrick Church (now St. Patrick Co-Cathedral) in Billings as associate pastor in 1944, and went on to serve briefly as a priest at St. Mary Church in Columbus. In 1950 he was assigned as administrator of Holy Family Church in Great Falls, where he served until 1960. From 1960 to 1968 he served as chaplain and professor at the College of Great Falls (now University of Providence), as well as chaplain at St. Thomas Orphanage in Great Falls from 1964 to 1966. He served as the editor of the diocesan newspaper, Catholic Register, from 1962 to 1975, and was chaplain at Columbus Hospital in Great Falls from 1966-1970. He took over as pastor of Holy Family in 1975 and served there until 1977. He served as associate pastor in Billings at St. Patrick from 1977 to 1981. He also served as chaplain at Deaconess Hospital (now Clinic Hospital) in Billings from 1979 to 1981. He moved to St. Peter parish in Wibaux in 1981, and in February of 1982 he took a sabbatical leave for further studies, and returned to complete his service in Wibaux in 1985. In 1985 he resided in Miles City and served as chaplain at Holy Rosary Hospital and the V. A Hospital until 1989, at which time he retired from ministry, but continued to serve as needed. After retirement, he lived part of the time in San Diego, Calif., and part of the

time in Miles City, Glendive and Billings. He held chancery positions of vice-chancellor and notary of the diocesan matrimonial tribunal.

Perhaps his most influential position was that of Spiritual Director of the Diocesan Cursillo Secretariat, beginning in 1968 until 1977. He touched and served many souls in the diocese through his dedicated service to this evangelizing movement as the Church entered the post-Vatican II era of renewal. He will be deeply missed by his brother priests, as well as the many people he reached through his generous pastoral service, in both the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings and the Diocese of San Diego.

Father Hopkins is preceded in death by his parents and brothers. He is survived by many nieces and nephews and their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Father Hopkins' Vigil will be held at Our Mother of Confidence Church in San Diego on Tuesday, August 29 at 7:00 p.m., with a Funeral Mass at 10:30 a.m. on August 30, 2017. Another Vigil will be held at St. Patrick Church in Billings on Thursday, August 31, at 6:00 p.m., with a Mass of Christian Burial at 12 noon on Friday, September 1, with a reception to follow. Interment will be held immediately after at Holy Cross Cemetery in Billings.

Clairemont Funeral Home in San Diego is handling the arrangements in collaboration with Dahl Funeral Home in Billings.

Memorial donations may be made to the St. Vincent de Paul Society in Billings. Condolences to family and friends may be sent to www.dahlfuneralchapel.com.