

# The Times-Tribune

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## Very Rev. Monsignor John I. Dolhy November 19, 2006

**The Very Rev. Monsignor John I. Dolhy, pastor emeritus of St. Nicholas Orthodox Catholic Church, Scranton, died Sunday after a brief illness. His wife, the former Pani Arlene Buleca Dolhy, preceded him in death eight years ago on Thanksgiving.**

Born on Sept. 10, 1920, in Vssna Olshava, Czechoslovakia, he was the son of the late Monsignor Ireneus and Anna Artim Dolhy and one of eight children. A third generation priest, his father was one of the pioneer Orthodox Catholic priests in this country and one of the organizers of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Catholic Diocese. In 2004, he celebrated 60 years in the priesthood with recognition for his totally unselfish dedication to the holy priesthood and tireless efforts on behalf of both the church and diocese.

Extremely active in diocesan affairs, he served as associate editor and business manager of the diocesan newspaper, The Church Messenger. He was the national spiritual adviser of the American Carpatho-Russian Youth Organization or ACRY, as well as an officer of the diocesan fraternal organization Liberty. His ability to relate to young people positioned him as co-founding director of the yearly diocesan altar boy retreats in both Johnstown and at Camp Nazareth in Mercer.

Monsignor Dolhy had always been interested in community and civic affairs and could always be coerced into political discussion. He was straightforward but had a knack for never offending anyone and putting others at ease. His tact and patience and general affability enabled him to accomplish much more through his avocation. For 12 years, he served on the Committee to Save Scranton State Hospital, known throughout the region for its commitment to the health care and well-being of the less fortunate, an issue still valid today.

After graduating from Perth Amboy High School in New Jersey with his beloved brother, Louis Dolhy, he attended the University of Bridgeport, Conn., and graduated from Christ the Savior Seminary, Johnstown. He was ordained a priest on July 23, 1944. His first assignment was pastor of SS. Peter and Paul Church, Rockaway, N.J. In September 1952, he assumed pastoral duties at St. Nicholas Church, Scranton, with the additional responsibility for St. Mary's, Dickson City, which he took through a major renovation.

Under his rigorous leadership, an ambitious building program was undertaken, enhancing the corner location of Vine Street and Jefferson Avenue in central city. The 19th century property was formerly the home of a Pennsylvania State Supreme Court judge and designed by the famous architect Richardson, who designed Trinity Church in Copley Square, Boston. Understanding the value of the stone home itself and the prime location of the property, Monsignor Dolhy dismantled the building, stone by stone, and recreated the magnificent edifice that stands today, topped by three gold-leaf domes, a symbol of Orthodox churches.

The richly decorated interior with its beautiful stained glass windows, baldichino, recently added iconostas and monstrous crystal chandelier stands as a testament to monsignor's leadership and tenacity.

A new rectory and renovated church hall further enhanced the property and visibility of the Orthodox religious community in the area. With this increased profile, Monsignor Dolhy was extremely instrumental in fostering ecumenical unity throughout Lackawanna County making him highly respected by people and clergy of all denominations.

Monsignor Dolhy was known for his kind word, warm heart and gentle manner and love of a good joke. He served as toastmaster for many local functions and always left them laughing. His hobbies included a talent for oil painting, of which he completed more than 300 in his lifetime, which were often publicly exhibited and at one time, were rotated at City Hall.

He had a beautiful liturgical voice and loved playing the violin, piano and harmonica. A highly disciplined man, he found time to relax by gardening and proudly landscaped and maintained the property he so loved, as well as the church cemetery. Many times he had been approached by the bishop to leave the Scranton area for other, bigger parishes, but he loved the area, its people and what he had achieved in the name of God's work. Monsignor Dolhy and his Pani were married on July 16, 1944. They leave three children, Nadine Dolhy Friedman, Ridgefield, Conn.; Daria Dolhy, Green Ridge section; and Gregory John Dolhy, Moscow, who was monsignor's devoted caregiver in his later years.

Monsignor Dolhy will lie in state at St. Nicholas Orthodox Catholic Church, 505 Jefferson Ave. Viewing hours will commence at 1 p.m. on Friday with a priestly burial service at 6 p.m. Viewing hours will resume until 9 p.m.

The funeral will be held Saturday at 10:30 a.m. with Hierarchical Divine Liturgy also at St. Nicholas Church, to be celebrated by his Eminence, the Most Rev. Metropolitan Nicholas, ruling bishop of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese, and fellow diocesan clergy. Interment will follow at St. George's Cemetery, Taylor.

Memorial contributions may be made to the donor's charity of choice. Flowers may be sent to St. Nicholas Church, 505 Jefferson Ave. Arrangements by Semian Funeral Home, Taylor.