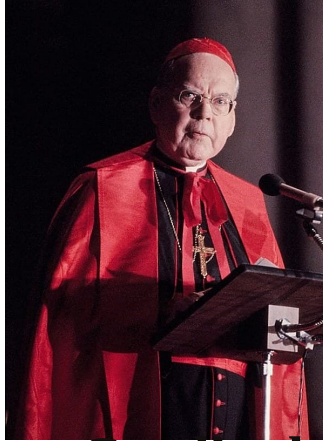




Terence Cardinal Cooke

March 1, 1921 - October 6, 1983

New York, New York

Terence James Cooke, the chauffeur's son from the Bronx who led the Archdiocese of New York for fifteen years while privately fighting leukemia, died at his residence in Manhattan on October 6, 1983. He was sixty-two.

He was born in New York City on March 1, 1921, the youngest of three children of Michael and Margaret Cooke, immigrants from County Galway. They named him after Terence MacSwiney, the Lord Mayor of Cork who had died on hunger strike the previous year. The family moved from Morningside Heights to the northeast Bronx, and after his mother died in 1930 an aunt helped raise the children.

He entered the minor seminary at thirteen and was ordained by Archbishop Francis Spellman on December 1, 1945. He then did something unusual for a young priest of his era and earned a master's degree in social work from the Catholic University of America. He worked with children's homes and youth programs, became Spellman's secretary in 1957, and was made an auxiliary bishop in 1965. That same year doctors diagnosed his leukemia. He told almost no one.

Pope Paul VI named him archbishop in 1968, a surprise choice. He was installed at St. Patrick's Cathedral on April 4, the day Martin Luther King Jr. was killed, and that night he went to Harlem to plead for calm. Two months later he presided at Robert F. Kennedy's funeral. He was made a cardinal in 1969, among the youngest in the College.

He was a gentle administrator with a social worker's instincts. He founded the Inner-City Scholarship Fund, an

archdiocesan housing program, nine nursing homes and the newspaper Catholic New York. He also served as the Catholic bishop for the U.S. armed forces.

Only in August 1983 did he tell the public how ill he was. In a final letter written days before his death he insisted that life is no less beautiful when it comes with illness or weakness. He lies beneath the altar of St. Patrick's, and in 1992 the Church opened his cause for sainthood.

Services

Died of leukemia at the archbishop's residence in Manhattan, New York City, October 6, 1983, aged 62. Seventh Archbishop of New York (1968-1983); created cardinal 1969; Military Vicar of the United States. Interred in the crypt beneath the high altar of St. Patrick's Cathedral. Declared a Servant of God in 1992. Portrait: photograph by Bernard Gotfryd (public domain, Library of Congress), cropped and hosted by Notice Nearby.

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