

NEWS RELEASE

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**AUXILIARY BISHOP CHERI DIES AT AGE 71**

*NEW ORLEANS, LA.* - It is with great sadness that the Archdiocese of New Orleans announces that Most Reverend Fernand Joseph Cheri, III, OFM, Auxiliary Bishop of New Orleans, died today, March 21, 2023. He was 71 years of age.

In a message this morning, Archbishop Aymond shared the news with clergy and religious of the archdiocese writing, "It is with a sad heart that I inform you that Bishop Fernand Cheri died this morning. He has been called home to the Lord. We mourn his death and thank God for his life and ministry. May he rest in the arms of the risen Christ."

Bishop Fernand Cheri was born in New Orleans, LA on January 28, 1952. He attended Epiphany Elementary School, New Orleans, St. John Prep, New Orleans, and St. Joseph Seminary College in St. Benedict. He received a Masters of Divinity at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans and a Masters of Theology from the Institute for Black Catholic Studies at Xavier University, New Orleans.

He was ordained to the priesthood on May 20, 1978 at St. Louis Cathedral.

After his ordination, Bishop Cheri served as Associate Pastor of several parishes around the archdiocese as well as pastor at St. Francis de Sales, New Orleans.

In 1996, he made his solemn profession in the Order of Friars Minor in the Province of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, and became a Franciscan. Bishop Cheri spent several years dedicated to campus ministry at Quincy University in Quincy, IL.

He returned to the Archdiocese of New Orleans, when his Episcopal Ordination as Auxiliary Bishop of New Orleans, and Titular Bishop of Membressa took place on March 23, 2015. He served as Auxiliary Bishop since his ordination and recently served the people of St. Peter Claver Parish as Administrator.

Bishop Cheri was also a popular guest speaker and revivalist. He traveled within the Archdiocese of New Orleans and nationally preaching and sharing his love of music.

In addition to his pastoral assignments, Bishop Cheri served as a member of the College of Consultors, was a teacher at St. Augustine High School, New Orleans, and campus minister at Xavier University, New Orleans. He served as the Vocation Minister for the OFM St. Louis Province, served on the Archbishop James P. Lyke Foundation, Catholic Campus Ministry Association, Episcopal Liaison to the African Congress Board of Trustees, and convener of the U.S. African American Bishops. Bishop Cheri was also very influential and active with the Knights and Ladies of St. Peter Claver and the Institute of Black Catholic Studies at Xavier University.

Funeral arrangements are pending.

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