

in a  
**Word**<sup>TM</sup>

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**I am the Resurrection  
and the Life**

Photo by Father James Pawlicki, SVD

# Congratulations to Bishop Fernand Cheri, OFM



*Bishop Cheri with mother Gladys*



*Bishops Steib and Guillory with Bishop Cheri*



*Bishop Carmon and new Bishop*



*Sister Jamie Phelps*

Bishop Fernand Cheri's ordination as auxiliary bishop for Archdiocese of New Orleans was living testimony to the words "we've come this far by faith"

For it was faith that was most evident on March 22, 2015 at the Prayer service the night before the actual ordination Mass. It was faith that brought the ordination ceremony to take on a spirited, cheerful tone.

We were blessed here at ***IN A WORD*** to be present for the prayer service and the ordination ceremony. What appears on these pages are photos of the prayer service ceremony we were privileged to attend.

At the prayer service that was held at the Sister's of the Holy Family motherhouse the spirit of joy was readily apparent when you walked through the doors. With the gracious hospitality of the Sisters of the Holy Family the service was a simple blessing and affirmation of the new Bishop who was nurtured through his years with the prayers of the Sisters.

Bishop Cheri is one of 7 children and the entire family and extended family were present. Many came from out town and when the service began it was standing room only.

Father Joseph Brown, SJ prepared a blessing ceremony for the new Bishop that was simple, engaging and joyful. With the Archdiocesan choir, directed by his brother Richard Cheri, singing with soulful voices the faith of so many African American Catholics was lifted up to God.

The blessing of the new Bishop was a touching ceremony. It all began with his mother, Gladys, though recovering from a broken hip came up to speak words of blessing for her son. Then in succession various individuals came to speak words of blessing. Through it all the entire congregation raised their hands in blessing. Faith was certainly present.

The blessing on that night by people of faith certainly inspired the new Bishop the next day at the ordination ceremony. For at the end of the ceremony as he spoke words of thanks Bishop Cheri referred time and time again to how “I...we... have come this far by faith”. Then as he broke out in song the entire Cathedral rocked with joy and pride in “one of their own”. Even Bishop’s mother despite her physical ailment stood up and sang and waved her so very New Orleans umbrella.

Congratulations Bishop Cheri and may God bless you in your ministry of service to God’s people.



*Blessing the new Bishop*





# in a word or two

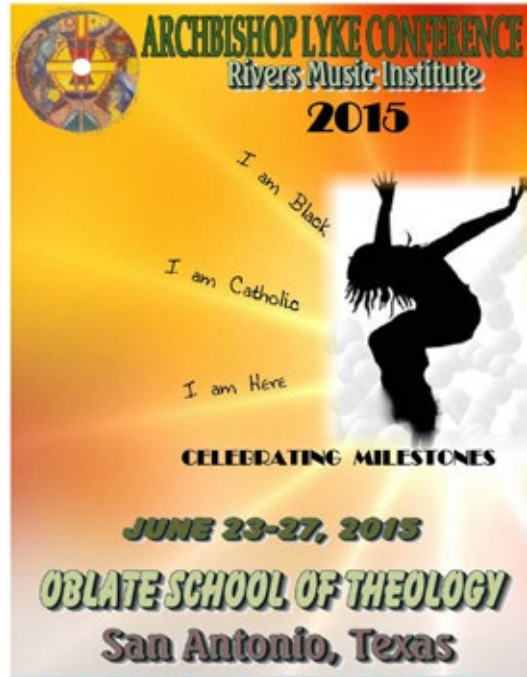


Father George Heffner, SVD passed away on March 29 at the Divine Word Residence in Techny, Illinois. He was 89 and had spent his priestly ministry in the Southern province of the Society of the Divine Word in the African American apostolate.

Born in Ottawa, Ohio, in 1926, Father George was the third of five children. He joined the Society of the Divine Word in 1944. He studied at St. Augustine's and was ordained to the priesthood in Bay St. Louis in 1957. He served several years as an assistant pastor at St. Leo in Los Angeles; Notre Dame in St. Martinville, Louisiana. and St. Augustine in New Orleans. In 1967, he was named pastor of St. Rose de Lima in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi.

Father Heffner also served St. John the Evangelist in Melville, Louisiana.; St. Thomas in Pointe-a-la-Hache, Louisiana. His last assignment was at St. Lawrence in Mowata, Louisiana. a place he loved and served with joy. Even after his retirement in 2006 and move to Bay Saint Louis many people of the parish often came to visit him. He moved to Techny in 2012 because of health. He was well cared for by the staff of Divine Word Residence at Techny.

He was a gentle, quiet, spiritual, kind man. Despite many physical adversities later in life he possessed a genuine smile and compassion towards all. May he rest in peace.



*IN A WORD* published an article on Bishop Cheri and his brother in the December 2007 issue. One can feel the Bishop's love of liturgy and African American music and worship.



*Front cover photo  
from Sacred Heart  
Jesuit Retreat  
House  
in Sedalia, Colorado*

**Divine Word Missionaries** is an international missionary community of over 7,000 brothers and priests. In 1905 the SVDs began working among African Americans in the Southern United States. Today, Divine Word Missionaries work in over 35 parishes in Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas and Arkansas.

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Web page can be found at <http://www.inaword.com>