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A Funeral Service of Dignity: Virgin Islands Leaders, Family and Friends Bid Final Goodbye to Jean P. Greaux

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Pallbearers, among them Senator Novelle Francis, carry the casket hosting the body of Jean P Greaux Jr. into the Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral in St. Thomas on Fri. Dec. 17, 2021. By. ERNICE GILBERT/ V.I. CONSORTIUM

SAINTS PETER AND PAUL CATHEDRAL, ST. THOMAS — Coming up before 9:00 a.m. Friday, the outside of the Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral was overflowing with people from all walks of life who came to say goodbye to Jean P. Greaux, Jr. one last time. His casket was still inside the hearse, parked alongside the cathedral as pallbearers discussed their plan to carry it inside.

On the porch of the edifice were dignitaries present and past, most of whom Mr. Greaux had worked with, waiting to get inside. Once 9:00 a.m. struck and the doors reopened, pallbearers steeled themselves to carry the weighted casket. As they made their way up some stairs and into the cathedral, spiritual hymns filled the atmosphere, lifting a thick, regretful aura and replacing it with a sense of grace.

With the casket inside the building near the entrance, Lorna Freeman sang "You Raise Me Up" by Jorsh Groban, interspersing "you" with "Jean" at various points of the song. Her captivating and projecting vocals brought emotion to hearts. As she sang from the second floor of the cathedral, her backdrop included church choir members and an organ player, a role that Mr. Greaux held.

The congregation included the likes of former Governor John P. de Jongh and his wife, Cecile, Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett, Bryan administration executive branch representatives, cabinet members, a number of senators to include Donna Frett-Gregory, the Senate president, people in media and many others from all walks of life. The booklet had even more formal recognitions.

As the service commenced, Mr. Greaux's casket was guided down to the alter area, where it remained for the entire service. The priest who delivered the sermon, Father Robert Kenfack, said the moment he heard the news of Mr. Greaux's passing was surreal. He told the audience that he could not believe the man who the church considered a switch breaker for his ability to fix any problem in the church, was gone. He said after learning of the death, he attempted to tell the church's bishop, who was traveling at the time. When he finally made contact, he saw the bishop surrounded with the joy and laughter of those around him. Fr. Kenfack ended the call and waited for the right moment. When he was finally able to share the tragic news with the bishop, it was no easier to receive. The bishop, he said, went silent and eventually hung up.

Fr. Kenfack alluded to the way Mr. Greaux is believed to have died, and said it was a failure of society, those in leadership, and the church. "We need people who can encourage us and give us another opportunity. We need that; we all need those moments. If we are alive, if we are not lying here like Jean, it's because at every situation we found hope somewhere. We continue to believe because there is something that brings us to life," Fr. Kenfack said.

He added "We need to ask in this situation not what happened to Jean, we need to ask what is the real nature of our relationships. Do we live such that we uplift people and make them feel the necessity of living? Do we really help one another in finding a reason to be alive? Those are the kinds of questions we need to ask, because most of the times, even in a hypocrite manner, will kill one another."

As the service closed, Fr. Kenfack delivered the final commendation and farewell. "May God give him a merciful journey and forgive all his sins. May Christ the good shepherd lead him safely home," he prayed.

The closed casket was led back outside as it came in, by pallbearers who guided it back into the hearse. With a police escort, the hearse with pallbearers on both sides made their way to the burial grounds at the Western Cemetery. They were followed by other vehicles carrying local officials and family members, while others, including church congregants and well-wishers, walked behind.

Mr. Greaux, [who died at 52 on November 30](#), was first a journalist who served in the field for more than three decades including in broadcast, and continued public service as Mr. de Jongh's communications director and more recently as head of corporate communication at the V.I. Water

and Power Authority.

He also kept the V.I. community updated with daily weather reports, a free service provided through email that had become a go-to during hurricane season.

Aside from media, Mr. Greaux was also into entertainment, helping manage one of the best-known USVI bands, Cool Sessions Brass. And he worked for years closely with [legendary USVI newsman Alvin G.](#)

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