

More than two dozen US bishops could retire for age reasons in 2009

WASHINGTON – Following the Jan. 5 retirements of 78-year-old Cardinal Adam J. Maida of Detroit and Bishop John J. McRaith of Owensboro, Ky., up to 27 more U.S. bishops, including three cardinals, could retire because of age this year.

There are 16 active U.S. bishops, including three cardinals, who have already turned 75. Eleven more will celebrate their 75th birthday in 2009.

At age 75 bishops are requested to submit their resignation to the pope.

Cardinal Bernard F. Law, archpriest of St. Mary Major Basilica in Rome and a cardinal since 1985, turned 75 Nov. 4, 2006. A former bishop of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, Mo., he was archbishop of Boston from 1984 until his resignation from that post in 2002 in the wake of controversy over his handling of cases of clergy sex abuse there. He was named to his Rome post in 2004.

Cardinal Edward M. Egan of New York, whose 75th birthday was April 2, 2007, also celebrated 50 years as a priest that year. He was made a New York auxiliary bishop in 1985, bishop of Bridgeport, Conn., in 1988, archbishop of New York in 2000 and a cardinal in 2001.

Cardinal J. Francis Stafford, a Baltimore native who marked his 75th birthday July 26, 2007, has been the Vatican's major penitentiary since 2003. Ordained a priest in 1957, he was made a Baltimore auxiliary in 1976 and bishop of Memphis, Tenn., in 1982. He became archbishop of Denver in 1986, president of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, 1996-2003, and a cardinal in 1998.

Following a tradition begun by Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI often has asked cardinals to stay on the job after they reached the age of 75. Even when a cardinal retires in his 70s, he remains an active member of the College of Cardinals, eligible to enter a conclave and vote for a new pope, until age 80.

The 13 other active U.S. bishops who are already 75 and the dates of their 75th

birthday are:

- Bishop Manuel Batakian of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Nareg in New York for Armenian Catholics; Nov. 5, 2004.
- Auxiliary Bishop John M. Dougherty of Scranton, Pa.; April 29, 2007.
- Archbishop Elden F. Curtiss of Omaha, Neb.; June 16, 2007.
- Bishop James A. Murray of Kalamazoo, Mich.; July 5, 2007.
- Bishop James M. Moynihan of Syracuse, N.Y.; July 6, 2007.
- Bishop John M. D'Arcy of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Ind.; Aug. 18, 2007.
- Archbishop Alfred C. Hughes of New Orleans; Dec. 2, 2007.
- Bishop Arthur N. Tafoya of Pueblo, Colo.; March 2, 2008.
- Bishop Edward P. Cullen of Allentown, Pa.; March 15, 2008.
- Bishop William L. Higi of Lafayette, Ind.; Aug. 29, 2008.
- Bishop Bernard J. Harrington of Winona, Minn.; Sept. 6, 2008.
- Bishop Tomas A. Camacho of Chalan Kanoa, Northern Marianas; Sept. 18, 2008.
- Auxiliary Bishop Robert P. Maginnis of Philadelphia; Dec. 22, 2008.

The 11 currently active bishops who will turn 75 in 2009 and their birthdays are:

- Auxiliary Bishop Francis X. Irwin of Boston, Jan. 9.
- Bishop Edmond Carmody of Corpus Christi, Texas, Jan. 12.
- Archbishop Alexander J. Brunett of Seattle, Jan. 17.
- Bishop Raymundo J. Pena of Brownsville, Texas, Feb. 19.
- Auxiliary Bishop Ignatius Wang of San Francisco, Feb. 27.

- Bishop William S. Skylstad of Spokane, Wash., March 2.
- Bishop Patrick R. Cooney of Gaylord, Mich., March 10.
- Bishop Robert J. Hermann, apostolic administrator of St. Louis, Aug. 12.
- Archbishop Daniel E. Pilarczyk of Cincinnati, Aug. 12.
- Archbishop Eusebius J. Beltran of Oklahoma City, Aug. 31.
- Auxiliary Bishop Guy Sansaricq of Brooklyn, N.Y., Oct. 6.