

Pope appoints Washington auxiliary bishop to head Richmond Diocese

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis has named Washington Auxiliary Bishop Barry C. Knestout, 55, as the 13th bishop of Richmond, Virginia.

He succeeds Bishop Francis X. DiLorenzo, who was Richmond's bishop from 2004 until his **death in August** at age 75.

The appointment was announced Dec. 5 at the Vatican.

Archbishop William E. Lori, who leads the Metropolitan See of Baltimore, which includes the suffragan sees Arlington, Va.; Richmond, Va.; Wheeling-Charleston, W.Va. and Wilmington, Del., said he was "most grateful" to the pope for Bishop Knestout's appointment.

"I have known and worked with Bishop Knestout for many years," Archbishop Lori said in a Dec. 5 statement, "as we served together not only as priests of the Archdiocese of Washington, but also in the office of Cardinal James Hickey. Bishop Knestout's appointment is a great blessing for the Church in Richmond and for those whom Bishop Knestout will so ably serve. It is my great pleasure to welcome him into the Metropolitan Province of Baltimore and I look forward to working more closely with him in his new role as Bishop of Richmond."

In a Dec. 5 statement, Cardinal Donald Wuerl of Washington said Bishop Knestout carries with him "the affection, respect and admiration of all of us with whom he so generously gave his time and efforts."

A native of Maryland, Bishop Knestout has been an auxiliary of the Washington Archdiocese since 2008.

"During all of this time, he has demonstrated his pastoral skills, his commitment to the church and her teaching, and his devoted service to those entrusted to his care," the cardinal said.

The appointment was publicized in Washington on December 5, 2017 by Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States.

Bishop Knestout was born in Cheverly on June 11, 1962. He attended Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, where he earned a Master of Divinity degree in 1988 and a Master of Arts degree in 1989.

He was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Washington June 24, 1989.

Assignments after ordination included: associate pastor, St. Bartholomew's Parish, Bethesda, MD (1989-1993); associate pastor, St. Peter's Parish, Waldorf (1993-1994); priest secretary to Cardinal James Hickey (1994-2004); executive director, Archdiocesan Office of Youth Ministry, (2001-2003); priest secretary to Cardinal Theodore McCarrick (2003-2004); pastor, St. John the Evangelist Parish, Silver Spring (2004-2006); and the Archdiocesan Secretary for Pastoral Life and Social Concerns (2006-2008).

Named a monsignor by Pope John Paul II in 1999, he was then named moderator of the curia in April 2007 and assisted Cardinal Wuerl in overseeing administrative affairs.

On Nov. 18, 2008, Pope Benedict XVI named Monsignor Knestout Auxiliary Bishop of Washington and titular bishop of Leavenworth. He was ordained a bishop by then-Archbishop Donald Wuerl on Dec. 29, 2008.

He has been a member of the administrative board of the Maryland Catholic Conference and the episcopal moderator of the American Catholic Correctional Chaplains Association. He serves as the Regional IV representative on the USCCB Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People as well as the Episcopal Liaison to the Diocesan Fiscal Management Conference.

The Diocese of Richmond comprises 36,711 square miles. It has a total population of 5,118,519 people of which 222,283, or 4 percent, are Catholic, according to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Catholic News Service contributed to this article.

This story will be updated.

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