

Two dozen U.S. bishops could retire for age reasons in 2010

WASHINGTON - Up to 24 U.S. bishops, including two cardinals, could retire because of age this year.

There are 11 active U.S. bishops, including one cardinal, who have already turned 75. Thirteen more will celebrate their 75th birthday in 2010.

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.

Turning 75 on April 19 this year is Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia. Born in Los Angeles, he was ordained an archbishop in 1985 while serving as head of the school that educates future Vatican diplomats. He returned to the United States in 1994 to become archbishop of St. Louis, holding that post until his appointment as archbishop of Philadelphia in 2003. He was elevated to the College of Cardinals that same year.

Pope Benedict XVI, like his predecessor Pope John Paul II, often 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 10 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.

- Bishop William L. Higi of Lafayette, Ind.; Aug. 29, 2008.
- Bishop Tomas A. Camacho of Chalan Kanoa, Northern Marianas; Sept. 18, 2008.
- Auxiliary Bishop Robert P. Maginnis of Philadelphia; Dec. 22, 2008.
- Bishop Edmond Carmody of Corpus Christi, Texas, Jan. 12, 2009.
- Archbishop Alexander J. Brunett of Seattle, Jan. 17, 2009.
- Bishop William S. Skylstad of Spokane, Wash., March 2, 2009.
- Auxiliary Bishop Robert J. Hermann of St. Louis, Aug. 12, 2009.
- Archbishop Eusebius J. Beltran of Oklahoma City, Aug. 31, 2009.
-