



Catholic Diocese of Richmond

Press Release

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For Immediate Release: August 18, 2017

The Passing of Francis X. DiLorenzo, 12th Bishop of the Diocese of Richmond

The Most Rev. Francis Xavier DiLorenzo, the 12th Bishop of Richmond, died Thursday, Aug. 17, 2017, at St. Mary's Hospital in Richmond. Cause of death was heart and kidney failure. He was 75.

“Today, the priests, deacons, religious and lay people of the Diocese of Richmond mourn the loss of our shepherd, who led the Diocese with wisdom and humility for 13 years,” said Msgr. Mark Richard Lane. “Bishop DiLorenzo had a profound understanding and faith in the Eucharistic sacrifice of our Lord, which sees past the Cross and into eternal life with our Savior. With that same faith and hope, we look forward to our happy reunion.”

Funeral arrangements will follow shortly.

In March 2004, Pope John Paul II named Bishop DiLorenzo – who was then the shepherd of the Diocese of Honolulu – the Bishop of Richmond. He was installed May 24, 2004. His episcopal motto was “*Christ Our Hope.*”

A moral theologian and a lover of history, Bishop DiLorenzo was known for his humility, his booming voice – which frequently broke into song – and his concern for those less fortunate, which he addressed especially through his interest in Catholic schools and lay Catholic formation.

Bishop DiLorenzo was a native of Philadelphia, PA. He was the oldest of three children born to Samuel and Anita Porrino DiLorenzo. He is survived by his sister, Anita Lawler, of Cape May, New Jersey, and brother Paul DiLorenzo, of Philadelphia, and close family friend, Sister Janice Johnson, Allentown, Pennsylvania.

During his tenure, vocations to the priesthood were a high priority. By the time of his death he had ordained 22 men to the priesthood. Enrollment in seminary had increased two-and-a-half-fold, from nine men enrolled in seminary to 31.

He is widely credited with saving Catholic schools in the Diocese with the formation of the McMahan Parater Foundation, whose mission is to strengthen schools by providing scholarships and financial assistance, as

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well as professional development. In addition to Catholic schools, he encouraged education of lay Catholics, and under his leadership founded the Lay Ecclesial Ministry Institute to better equip parish leaders to teach the faith to children and adults.

In 2014, he launched the Diocese's first-ever capital campaign, *Living Our Mission*, which raised \$105 million to strengthen parishes, support clergy, advance the mission of spreading the Gospel, and develop the future Church.

In 2004, with Bishop (now emeritus) Paul S. Loverde of the Diocese of Arlington, he established the Virginia Catholic Conference to represent the bishops and their dioceses on public policy issues in Richmond, and, with the United States Catholic Conference, in Washington, D.C.

A graduate of St. Callistus School and St. Thomas More High School, he attended St. Charles Borromeo Seminary and was ordained to the priesthood for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia by John Cardinal Krol on May 18, 1968. He served in the Archdiocese in pastoral and educational assignments from 1968 to 1971.

Bishop DiLorenzo was sent to Rome where he earned a license in sacred theology from the Academia Alphonsiana and a doctorate in sacred theology from the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum).

Returning to the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, Bishop DiLorenzo was chaplain and instructor in theology at St. Pius X High School, Pottstown, and later was appointed chaplain and associate professor of moral theology at Immaculata College. In 1983, he was honored with the title Chaplain to His Holiness Pope John Paul II, before returning to St. Charles Borromeo Seminary as vice rector, and later, rector. He also was a member of the Archdiocesan Committee and a Prosynodal Judge of the Metropolitan Tribunal. He was named a member of the Papal Household and received the title Prelate of Honor of His Holiness Pope John Paul II.

On January 26, 1988, he was appointed Titular Bishop of Tigia and Auxiliary Bishop of Scranton, Pennsylvania, and ordained to the episcopacy on March 8, 1988. Five years later Pope John Paul II appointed him Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Honolulu and he was installed Bishop on Oct. 4, 1994.

During his administration, Bishop DiLorenzo was nominated by the Pope as a participant in the 1998 Synod of Bishops for Asia. He encouraged more collaboration between Asian and U.S. bishops to serve the growing needs of Catholic Asian immigrants in the United States.

He was a member of the USCCB's Administrative Committee and chairman of the Committee on Science and Human Values where he inaugurated a series of popular teaching brochures, reflecting the bishops' consultations with top scientists on the relationship of science and religion and ethical issues in the rapidly growing fields of genetic testing and genetic screening. Earlier he served the USCCB committee on doctrine and the ad hoc committee on bishops' life and ministry.