

Map of the Archdiocese of Washington



History of the Archdiocese of Washington

Catholicism was brought to Maryland in 1634 when Jesuit Father Andrew White celebrated the first Mass held in the English-speaking colonies, on the shores of St. Clement's Island. Founded as a haven for Catholics and a place of religious toleration, Maryland was the site of the Religious Act of 1649, the first legislation a representative body ever enacted for religious freedom. Sadly, between 1690 and 1776, Catholics in Maryland suffered under oppressive penal laws, but they persevered and the Catholic faith flourished.

In 1789, Archbishop John Carroll, who was born in Upper Marlboro, was appointed the first bishop of the United States. That same year, Georgetown University, the nation's first Catholic college, was founded. The Archdiocese of Washington is also home to The Catholic University of America.

Originally part of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the City of Washington was named a separate archdiocese by Pope Pius XII in 1939, under the direction of Baltimore Archbishop Michael J. Curley. Eight years later, Archbishop Patrick A. O'Boyle was named the first resident archbishop, and Calvert, Charles, Montgomery, Prince George's and St. Mary's Counties joined Washington as part of the new archdiocese. Archbishop O'Boyle immediately began his pioneering work to desegregate Catholic schools and parishes, build new churches and establish new social service ministries. He was elevated to cardinal in 1967 and retired in 1973.

His successor, Archbishop William Baum, was elevated to cardinal in 1976. He was transferred to the Roman Curia four years later, where he served until 2001. While Archbishop of Washington, Cardinal Baum was joined by the faithful of the archdiocese in welcoming Pope John Paul II on his first papal visit to the United States in 1979.

James Hickey was appointed Archbishop of Washington in 1980 and elevated to the College of Cardinals in 1988. Under Cardinal Hickey's leadership, the archdiocese greatly expanded service ministries, establishing programs such as Victory Housing, Birthing and Care and the Archdiocesan Health Care and Legal Networks. The archdiocese also grew in diversity, with Mass celebrated in over 20 languages, including Chinese, French, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish and Vietnamese.

In November 2000, Cardinal Hickey retired. His successor, then-Newark Archbishop Theodore E. McCarrick, was installed in January 2001. Just six weeks later he was elevated to the College of Cardinals. Cardinal McCarrick emphasized vocations and ministry to diverse cultures, particularly the Hispanic community. He opened a new seminary for missionary priests of the archdiocese.

In May 2006, Pope Benedict XVI appointed then-Pittsburgh Bishop Donald W. Wuerl as Archbishop of Washington. He was installed on June 22, 2006. Known nationally for his catechetical and teaching ministry and for his efforts to strengthen Catholic education, he is active in the community, joining with civic and business leaders to promote education, service to the poor, pastoral assistance to refugees and immigrants, as well as interfaith understanding. He has made renewing sacramental life a priority, introducing a successful initiative on the Sacrament of Reconciliation that quickly became a model for other dioceses.

He also hosted Pope Benedict XVI during his historic visit to Washington, DC in April 2008. Pope Benedict celebrated Mass for nearly 50,000 people from around the nation at Nationals Park, visited the White House, met with the United States bishops and leaders

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of other faiths, and addressed Catholic educators.

Cardinal Donald Wuerl was among 24 new Cardinals created on November 20, 2010 by Pope Benedict XVI at a consistory at St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City. He received San Pietro in Vincoli (Saint Peter in Chains) as his titular church.

Today, the Archdiocese of Washington is home to over 580,000 Catholics. Nearly 100 Catholic schools educate 30,000 children while service agencies, including Catholic Charities and Victory Housing, have made

the archdiocese one of the largest private social service providers in the region. Adult Catholics are finding new educational and spiritual resources to deepen their faith. Parish-based programs, opportunities for Eucharistic adoration, evangelization efforts and small faith communities are filling their hunger to know Christ.

Although diverse in nationality, Catholics of the Archdiocese of Washington share a common faith and a commitment to reflect Christ in the world through prayer, education and service.

Statistical Profile of the Archdiocese of Washington (2010)

Clergy and Religious

Cardinal Archbishop	1
Cardinal-Archbishop Emeritus	2
Auxiliary Bishops (including retired)	4
Abbot	1
Retired Abbot.....	1
Priests in Archdiocese Archdiocesan.....	290
Religious.....	377
Extern	146
Seminarians, Archdiocesan	41
Permanent Deacons	199
Religious Brothers	99
Religious Sisters.....	562

Parishes, Communities, Basilica

Parishes.....	140
Missions and Communities ...	9
Basilica	1

Charitable Institutions

Catholic Hospitals.....	3
Total Assisted.....	573,982
Health Care Centers.....	5
Total Assisted.....	89,176
Homes for Aged, Chronically Ill or Invalids	24
Total Assisted.....	2,010
Residential Care of Children .	1
Total Assisted.....	280
Day Care Centers.....	6
Total Assisted.....	382
Specialized Homes.....	22
Total Assisted.....	14,909
Special Centers for Social Services.....	27
Total Assisted.....	181,000

Residential Care of Persons with Disabilities.....	21
Total Assisted	360

Education in the Archdiocese of Washington

Seminaries, Archdiocesan....	2
Students.....	104
Seminaries, Religious	11
Students.....	152
Total Seminarians Studying in Archdiocese	219
Colleges and Universities....	3
Total Students.....	12,250
High Schools Archdiocesan.....	2
Total Students.....	786
High Schools, Private	16
Total Students.....	9,354
Elementary/PreK, Archdiocesan.....	65
Total Students.....	16,684
Elementary/PreK, Private ...	12
Total Students.....	1,741
Schools, Students with Disabilities.....	1
Total Students.....	61
Religious Education Program High School Students	2,917
Elementary Students ...	30,680

Total Students under Catholic Instruction 74,695

Teachers in the Archdiocese Priests (Full-time).....	22
Brothers	12
Sisters	66
Lay Teachers	2,368

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Archbishop of Washington

His Eminence Donald Cardinal Wuerl



Ordained to the Priesthood
December 17, 1966

Ordained Auxiliary Bishop of Seattle
January 6, 1986

Named Bishop of Pittsburgh
February 12, 1988

Named Archbishop of Washington
May 16, 2006

Installed as Archbishop of Washington
June 22, 2006

Elevated to the College of Cardinals
November 20, 2010

Auxiliary Bishops of Washington



Most Rev. Francisco González, S.F.
Titular Bishop of Lamfua
Phone: 301-853-4566 Fax: 301-853-7696



Most Rev. Martin D. Holley
Titular Bishop of Rusubisir
Phone: 301-853-4563 Fax: 301-853-7698



Most Rev. Barry C. Knestout
Titular Bishop of Leavenworth
Phone: 301-853-4520 Fax: 301-853-5346

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Most Rev. Leonard Olivier, S.V.D.
Titular Bishop of Leges
Auxiliary Bishop of Washington, Retired
Phone: 202-347-2713 Fax: 202-347-1401

Former Archbishops of Washington



Most Rev. Michael J. Curley
First Archbishop
1939–1947



Patrick Cardinal O'Boyle
1948 -1973



William Cardinal Baum
1973-1980

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James Cardinal Hickey
1980-2000



Theodore Cardinal McCarrick
2001-2006

(Updated: January 2011)