



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE

Office of Communications • *The Long Island Catholic* • *Fe Fuerza Vida*

50 North Park Avenue, Rockville Centre, NY 11570

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Biography:

Most Reverend William Francis Murphy, D.D., S.T.D. Bishop-Emeritus, Diocese of Rockville Centre

William Francis Murphy was born May 14, 1940 in West Roxbury, Massachusetts to Cornelius and Norma Murphy. He attended Boston Public Schools, including Boston Latin School for Harvard College, and pursued studies for the priesthood at St. John's (Major) Seminary in Boston and the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, where he earned a doctorate in Sacred Theology. He was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Boston at Saint Peter's Basilica, Vatican City, on December 16, 1964.

Father Murphy returned to Boston after his ordination. Over the next ten years there he served as an assistant pastor in Groveland, Winchester and East Boston while also teaching at Emmanuel College and Pope John XXIII Seminary.

In 1974, Father Murphy was called back to Rome where he became a member of the Pontifical Commission *Jusititia et Pax*. He was appointed Under Secretary in 1980, a position he would hold for seven years. He authored various publications for the commission, including *Person, Nation and State* in 1982 and *True Dimensions of Development Today* a year later. While in Rome, Father Murphy was also a lecturer in Theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University and the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas.

Father Murphy returned to the Boston Archdiocese in 1987 to serve in several capacities, including Secretary of Community Relations, Director of the Office of Social Justice, Director of Pope John XXIII Seminary, and Administrator of Sacred Heart Parish, Lexington, Massachusetts. Father Murphy was named Chaplain of Honor to His Holiness in 1979, with the title of Monsignor and elevated to the rank of Prelate of Honor in 1987 by Pope John Paul II. In 1993, Monsignor Murphy was named Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia for the Archdiocese of Boston. He was appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Boston and Titular Bishop of Saia Maggiore on November 21, 1995 and consecrated a month later on December 27, 1995.

Pope John Paul II appointed Bishop Murphy to succeed the late Bishop James T. McHugh to head the Diocese of Rockville Centre on June 26, 2001. He was installed as the Fourth Bishop of Rockville Centre on September 5, 2001. Bishop Murphy served as the fourth Bishop of the Diocese of Rockville Centre until his retirement was accepted by Pope Francis on December 9, 2016 with the naming of the Most Reverend John O. Barres, Bishop of the Diocese of Allentown as the Fifth Bishop of the Diocese of Rockville Centre. Bishop Murphy continued to serve as Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Rockville Centre until the January 31, 2017 installation of Bishop Barres.

Bishop Murphy has served several times as a member of a Holy See Delegation for United Nations conferences, and as a member of the Third United Nations Special Session on Disarmament in 1988. He has been a member of three Presidential Delegations to Haiti (1987, 1990 and 1991), and was appointed to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom by President George W. Bush in 2001.



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His service to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) included a position on the Board of Directors, as well as a member of the Committee on Latin America, Ad Hoc Committee on Health Care Issues and an adjunct to the Committee on the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the USCCB Committee on Migration. He currently serves as member of the Committee on International Justice and Peace. He has served as a representative to the Orthodox Union and the Orthodox Rabbis of the RCA.

Bishop Murphy served as Chairman of the USCCB Committee on Domestic Justice, Peace and Human Development. In addition, Bishop Murphy served on the USCCB Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, and the Committee on International Policy. He has served as a member of the Administrative Committee as well as the Committee on Priorities and Plans. He is a member of the Board of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association.

In 2007, Pope Benedict XVI appointed Bishop Murphy to serve as a member of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. In 2008, Bishop Murphy was appointed a consultant of the Commission for Religious Relations with Jews of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. He is a participant in the National Council of Synagogues-USCCB Dialogue.

Bishop Murphy is fluent in English, Italian, French and Spanish, and has a program called “Catholic Perspectives” on Telecare, the diocesan television station.

Bishop Murphy has been awarded a Doctor of Theology, Honoris Causa, from Assumption College in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1999 and a Doctor of Humane Letters, Honoris Causa, from Salem State College, also in Massachusetts, in 1999. He received the Rabin Peacemaker Award from Merrimack College in Massachusetts in 2002 as well as a Doctor of Laws from St. John's University in New York in 2002. Bishop Murphy served as a member of the Board of Trustees of The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC and is currently Trustee Emeritus of the Board of Trustees of The Catholic University of America.

Bishop Murphy is a Knight Commander with Star of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, Ecclesiastical Commander of Grace in the Sacred Military Constantinian Order of St. George, and was invested as Assistant Chaplain of the American Association of the Sovereign Order of Malta in 2002.

Bishop Murphy has two brothers, Paul (deceased), Robert, and three sisters, Virginia Murphy (deceased), Katherine Woerner (deceased) and Sister Paul St. Katherine Murphy, SND.

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Updated: 6/12/18