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**Holy Father Pope Francis Grants Bishop Richard Lennon Retirement Status
Bishop Daniel Edward Thomas from Toledo Appointed as Apostolic Administrator**

Holy Father, Pope Francis, has granted Catholic Diocese of Cleveland Bishop Richard Lennon early retirement status, accepting his resignation from the pastoral governance of the diocese. Bishop Lennon made the request for early retirement in a letter to Pope Francis in late November citing his ongoing health challenges as the reason for his decision to retire. The mandatory retirement age for bishops in the United States is 75.

Pope Francis also appointed the Most Reverend Daniel Edward Thomas as the Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Cleveland, effective immediately. Bishop Thomas currently serves as the bishop of the Diocese of Toledo, Ohio. As Apostolic Administrator, Bishop Thomas was chosen to administer the affairs of the Diocese of Cleveland until such time that the Holy Father makes a permanent appointment. While overseeing the governance of the Diocese of Cleveland, Bishop Thomas will continue serving in his role as bishop of Toledo.

His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI named Bishop Lennon to the leadership position over nearly 700,000 Catholics in eight counties of the Diocese of Cleveland on April 4, 2006. Bishop Lennon became the 10th Bishop of the diocese at a Mass of Installation at St. John the Evangelist Cathedral on May 15, 2006

Bishop Lennon attended Boston College before entering St. John's Seminary in Brighton, Massachusetts where he received Master of Arts degrees in church history and sacramental theology.

Bishop Lennon was ordained to the priesthood in May, 1973 and served in the Archdiocese of Boston as a parish priest, fire department chaplain, assistant for canonical affairs, and rector of St. John's Seminary.

Ordained as an auxiliary bishop in the Archdiocese of Boston on September 14, 2001, Bishop Lennon was called upon to serve there as Apostolic Administrator for the Archdiocese from December of 2002 to July of 2003.

During his tenure as Bishop of Cleveland, Bishop Lennon established a vision for the Church in the diocese focusing on evangelization with an emphasis on the Gospel. Upon taking office, Bishop Lennon immediately set out to visit all of the parishes and schools in the Diocese. In 2009, he acted on years of planning work developed prior to his arrival in Cleveland and directed a diocesan reconfiguration effort aimed at strengthening the diocese for the future by ensuring diocesan resources would be shared equitably throughout the diocese.

Other accomplishments by Bishop Lennon to improve the diocese included a major capital campaign, the institution of parish and school internal audits, and the establishment of norms on models for Catholic schools and catechetical models for children.

Bishop Thomas was appointed bishop of the Diocese of Toledo by Pope Francis on August 26, 2014. Prior to his appointment in Toledo, Bishop Thomas was an Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia (Pennsylvania), where he assisted the Archbishop in overseeing various curial offices as well as serving as a regional bishop, from 2006 to until his appointment in Toledo.

Ordained to the priesthood for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia by John Cardinal Krol on May 18, 1985, Father Thomas served the diocese as parish parochial vicar and as pastor. Father Thomas was ordained to the episcopacy for service in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia on July 26, 2006.

Bishop Thomas was assigned to assist the Archbishop with administrative and diocesan responsibilities including oversight of the Media Affairs Department comprised of the Office for Communications and CatholicPhilly.com; the Office for Clergy including the Department of Permanent Deacons; and the Vocation Office for the Diocesan Priesthood.

Bishop Thomas earned his Bachelor and Master of Arts degrees at Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary in Wynnewood, PA. He received his Licentiate in Sacred Theology, Dogmatic Theology, from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Italy.

About the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland:

The Catholic Diocese of Cleveland was founded on April 23, 1847. Under the leadership of the Most Reverend Richard Lennon, bishop of Cleveland, it is the twenty-third largest diocese in the United States. The diocese encompasses the counties of Cuyahoga, Summit, Lorain, Lake, Geauga, Medina, Wayne and Ashland. There are more than 692,000 Catholics in the Diocese, and Catholic Charities- Diocese of Cleveland is one of the largest diocesan systems of social services in the world. There are 185 parishes, 114 Catholic schools, one pastoral center and one mission office within the diocese. The cathedral is the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, located in downtown Cleveland.