News



Pope Benedict XVI greets Bishop Richard Garcia of Monterey, Calif., in 2012 at the Vatican. Bishop Garcia died July 11 at age 71 from complications of Alzheimer's disease. (CNS/L'Osservatore Romano)

by Catholic News Service

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

Monterey, Calif. — July 12, 2018

Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

Bishop Richard Garcia, who headed the Diocese of Monterey since 2007, died July 11 of complications from Alzheimer's disease. He was 71.

Garcia was diagnosed in April "with the onset of Alzheimer's disease and experienced a very rapid decline in health," the diocese said.

"Blessed with a deep faith in God and a life of priestly ministry, he passed into the loving embrace of his heavenly Father," it said. "As a spiritual shepherd, he had a special concern for the poor, the incarcerated, migrant workers and immigrant communities. He was proud of his Mexican-American heritage and the diversity of cultures that are represented in the church."

"The Diocese of Monterey asks for prayers during this time of loss," it added.

The body of Garcia is scheduled to lie in repose at San Carlos Cathedral in Monterey July 16 before being moved to Madonna del Sasso Church in Salinas for visitations July 17 and 18.

The diocese planned different visitation times: for laypeople, priests and religious from neighboring dioceses, and the general public (July 17); and for Monterey diocesan staff, parish staff, school staff, ecumenical representatives, priests, deacons and religious, parish and fraternal organization representatives (July 18). Evening prayer also is scheduled on those days.

His funeral Mass is to be celebrated the morning of July 19, followed by a private committal service.

"Bishop Garcia was known for his very personable, welcoming and friendly demeanor," the diocese said. "He always had time for his priests, deacons, religious, seminarians and the people of God throughout the Diocese of Monterey."

In addition to serving as chairman of the Restorative Justice Committee for the California Catholic Conference, the public policy arm of the state's Catholic bishops, Garcia is also on the board of Catholic Legal Immigration Network Inc., or CLINIC. He also served on various committees for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops including the migration committee and the cultural diversity committee.

Richard John Garcia was born in San Francisco April 24, 1947, to Manual Garcia and Anita Maria Adame, both natives of Jalisco, Mexico. They had immigrated to the United States with their families when they were children.

The future bishop attended St Joseph's High School Seminary in Los Altos Hills and received both his bachelor's and master's degrees from St. Patrick's Seminary in Menlo Park. After pursuing doctoral studies in dogmatic theology in Rome from 1980 to 1984, he served on the faculties of both the college and graduate seminaries at St. Patrick's from 1985 to 1992.

Advertisement

He was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of San Francisco June 15, 1973, at Sacred Heart Church in San Jose.

When the San Francisco Archdiocese was split in 1981 to create the new Diocese of San Jose, then-Father Garcia, who had been serving in the San Jose area, became one of the priests of the new diocese. At that time, he was studying for an advanced degree in theology at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome.

He served as an associate pastor at St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Morgan Hill. Before being appointed pastor of St. Leo the Great Parish in San Jose in 1995, Garcia served as the vocations director and the vicar for clergy.

In 1997, St. John Paul II named him an auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Sacramento and he was ordained a bishop Jan. 28, 1997.

In December 2006, he was named the fourth bishop of Diocese of Monterey by Pope Benedict XVI, succeeding Bishop Sylvester Ryan, who retired after 14 years as head of the diocese. Garcia was installed Jan. 30, 2007.

At his installation Mass, a multilingual liturgy which drew over 1,700 people to the Monterey Conference Center, he asked Catholics of California's central coast to "work with me, minister with me, collaborate with me, build with me and love with me."