News



Pope Benedict XVI greets Bishop Richard Lennon of Cleveland during a Feb. 2 , 2012, meeting at the Vatican. Retired Bishop Lennon died at age 72 Oct. 29, 2019, at a nursing home just outside Cleveland. Benedict retired Feb. 28, 2013. (CNS/L'Osservatore Romano)

by Catholic News Service

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Cleveland — October 29, 2019

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Bishop Richard Lennon, 72, whose time as the 10th bishop of Cleveland was marked by a commitment to evangelization with an emphasis on the Gospel, died Oct. 29 following a prolonged illness.

He was granted early retirement Dec. 28, 2016, by Pope Francis.

Bishop Nelson Perez of Cleveland recalled Lennon as a man with great love for the Catholic Church.

"In his service to the diocese, Bishop Lennon showed a deep dedication to the faithful governance of the diocese and a tremendous love of the church and the people he shepherded," Perez said in a statement. "May the Lord grant him eternal rest."

Lennon was installed in the Cleveland Diocese April 4, 2006, following the retirement of Bishop Anthony Pilla. He arrived at a time when the diocese was undergoing a reconfiguration that led to the closing of 50 parishes, mostly in inner city neighborhoods, and the realignment of ministries across eight counties of Northeast Ohio that saw 17 merged new parishes open in 2009 and 2010.

Members of 12 of the closed parishes appealed Lennon's decision to the Vatican. The Vatican's Congregation for Clergy overturned the closings of the parishes in 2012, saying the process outlined in canon law for shuttering a parish was not followed.

Prior to Lennon's appointment to Cleveland by Pope Benedict XVI, he was an auxiliary bishop in the Archdiocese of Boston, where he served as apostolic administrator for seven months beginning in December 2002 in the aftermath of the clergy sexual abuse crisis that emerged earlier that year.

In Cleveland, Lennon quickly became widely known across the diocese as he visited each parish and school. He established an internal financial audit procedure for parishes and schools and his interest in faith education led him to introduce norms on models for Catholic schools and catechetics for children.

He also oversaw the Rooted in Faith capital campaign that resulted in $170 million being raised to strengthen parishes and Catholic schools, build the clergy retirement fund, boost evangelization efforts and support the Cathedral of St. John the

Evangelist.

Lennon was born in Arlington, Massachusetts, March 26, 1947. He attended Boston College before entering St. John's Seminary in Brighton, Massachusetts, to study for the priesthood. He was ordained in1973.

He served as a parish priest, fire department chaplain, assistant for canonical affairs and rector of St. John's Seminary prior to being appointed an auxiliary bishop by St. John Paul II in 2001.

In addition, he was installed as a Knight of Malta and as a Knight of the Holy Sepulchre in 2001.

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