News
Bishop Christopher Coyne of Burlington, Vt., blesses holy oil during the chrism Mass at St. Jos

Bishop Christopher Coyne of Burlington, Vt., blesses holy oil during the chrism Mass at St. Joseph Cathedral April 16, 2019. (CNS photo/Cori Fugere Urban, Vermont Catholic)



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Pope Francis has appointed Bishop Christopher Coyne of Burlington, Vermont, as coadjutor archbishop of Hartford, Connecticut.

Now-Archbishop Coyne, who turned 65 June 17, has headed the statewide Burlington Diocese since his installation Jan. 29, 2015. Before that, he was an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis from 2011 to 2015.

He will serve alongside Archbishop Leonard Blair, 74, who has served as Hartford's fifth archbishop since he was installed in December 2013. Next April Blair turns 75, the age at which canon law requires bishops to submit their resignation to the pope.

The appointment of the coadjutor was publicized in Washington June 26 by Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States.

As coadjutor, Coyne will automatically succeed Blair upon his retirement.

Coyne will take up residence in the Archdiocese of Hartford with a Mass of welcome to be celebrated Oct. 9 at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Hartford.

He will serve as the apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Burlington until October. At that time, the diocesan college of consultors will elect an administrator to lead the diocese until the pope appoints a new bishop.

"I am so looking forward to serving here over the next few months with Archbishop Blair and getting to know the good people, the churches, the clergy and the culture of Hartford so that I may serve you well as your archbishop," the newly named coadjutor said in a video message to the Hartford Archdiocese posted on the archdiocesan website.

Having been a Boston archdiocesan priest, an auxiliary bishop in Indianapolis and Vermont's bishop, "I have a little bit of a skill set to bring, but I know I have a lot to learn and I've heard such wonderful things about this church," Coyne said. "I am so looking forward to serving the church in the name of the Lord Jesus and in the faith of the Catholic community which we all share and love so much."

"My name is Bishop ... Archbishop Coyne. I'm still getting used to it," he added with a smile at the end of his message.

During his tenure as Burlington's bishop, Coyne carried out a diocesan synod, ministered with his clergy, staff, and parish leaders through the COVID pandemic "and maintained the good works of the Catholic schools of the state," a diocesan news release said. "Under his leadership the Vermont Catholic Community Foundation (VCCF) was established to foster and support the good works of the Church throughout the state."

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Christopher James Coyne was born June 17, 1958, in Woburn, Massachusetts. A product of public education in his hometown, he graduated from Woburn High School in 1976, while working through both high school and college as a dishwasher, sporting goods salesman, lifeguard and musician.

After earning a bachelor's degree in business management from the University of Lowell, Massachusetts, in 1980, he worked full time as a bartender for two years before entering the seminary.

He earned a master of divinity degree from St. John's Seminary in Boston in 1986 and was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Boston June 7 that year.

Then-Father Coyne was parochial vicar of St. Mary of the Hills in Milton, Massachusetts, before pursuing his studies in Rome. He earned a licentiate and doctorate in sacred liturgy in 1992 and 1994, respectively, from the Pontifical University of Sant'Anselmo in Rome.

He also was pastor of Our Lady of Help of Christians in Newton, Massachusetts, and until his appointment as an auxiliary bishop for the Indianapolis Archdiocese in 2011, he was pastor of St. Margaret Mary Parish in Westwood, Massachusetts, for five years.

During his time as a priest in Boston, he also was a professor of liturgy and homiletics, the director of Office of Worship and spokesman for the Archdiocese of Boston.

He wrote and hosted four television series for the Boston archdiocesan CatholicTV network; one such series, "Sacred Space," was nominated for a regional Emmy award.

On the national level, he is a former chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Communications (2015-2018), has been a member of the USCCB Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis (2012-2017) and since 2017 has been a member of the USCCB Committee on Divine Worship.

Coyne is a lifelong Patriots, Celtics and Bruins fan, a (Maine) beach bum and an avid skier and golfer, according to a profile of him posted on the Burlington diocesan website. He is an uncle to 11 nieces and nephews. "Through the gift of his extended family, he's additionally blessed with the love and goodness of many aunts, uncles and cousins," the post says.

The Archdiocese of Hartford covers nearly 2,300 square miles and is made up of three counties: Hartford, Litchfield and New Haven. It has a Catholic population of 427,669 out of a total population of over 1.9 million.