



# DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

*Office of Communications*

## **Biography of Most Reverend David J. Walkowiak, J.C.D.**

Bishop Walkowiak was born David John Walkowiak on June 18, 1953 in East Cleveland, Ohio. He is the son of Dr. John Walkowiak of Rocky River, Ohio and the late Virginia Walkowiak. He has three sisters who live in Ohio: Sue Hannon of Bay Village, Jan Striegl of Avon Lake and Carol Duffy of Westlake.

Bishop Walkowiak attended Saint Bernadette School in Westlake, Ohio and graduated from Saint Ignatius High School in Cleveland. His college studies were at the University of Notre Dame, where in 1975, he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in government and international studies. He studied at Saint Mary Seminary in Cleveland and received a Master of Divinity degree in 1979.

Following ordination to the priesthood June 9, 1979 by the late James Cardinal Hickey at the Cathedral of Saint John the Evangelist in Cleveland, he was assigned as associate pastor to Saint Mary Parish in Lorain, Ohio.

Bishop Walkowiak later studied canon law at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., where he received the Licentiate degree in 1984 and the Doctorate degree in 1987. After completing his studies in 1986, Bishop Anthony Pilla assigned him to the faculty of Saint Mary Seminary in Cleveland and also appointed him vice chancellor of the Diocese of Cleveland.

In 1993, he began work as an adjutant judicial vicar for the appeals court of Cincinnati, Ohio; Steubenville, Ohio; and Washington, D.C. In 2006, Bishop Pilla appointed Bishop Walkowiak pastor of Saint Joan of Arc Parish in Chagrin Falls, where he served until June 2013.

He was appointed bishop of the Diocese of Grand Rapids by Pope Francis on April 18, 2013. During Mass on June 18, 2013 at the Cathedral of Saint Andrew, he was ordained a bishop and installed as the twelfth bishop of Grand Rapids. The principal ordaining bishop was Most Rev. Allen H. Vigneron, archbishop of Detroit.

Among the priorities of his episcopacy, Bishop Walkowiak has launched the [Bishop's Catholic Schools Initiative](#), restarted the permanent diaconate program in the diocese, approved a pastoral plan for Hispanic ministry, and undertaken funding of seminarian education and clergy retirement into the future through the *Our Shepherds – Our Future* capital campaign.