



DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

Biography - Bishop Walter A. Hurley

Bishop Walter A. Hurley was born Walter Allison Hurley on May 30, 1937 in Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada. He is the son of Charles R. Hurley and Anne Elizabeth Ball (both deceased). He has four sisters and a brother: Elizabeth Deal, Gerald Hurley (deceased), Eileen Godin, Charlene Soleau and Annette Burt.

Bishop Hurley attended St. Dunstan Grade School in Fredericton, and St. Anne High School in Church Point, Nova Scotia. He moved to Detroit, Michigan in 1955. He graduated from Sacred Heart Seminary, Detroit, in 1961 (B.A.) and St. John's Seminary in Plymouth, Michigan, in 1965 (M.Div.).

Following his ordination to the priesthood June 5, 1965 by Archbishop (later Cardinal) John F. Dearden, he was assigned as associate pastor of St. Dorothy Parish, Warren. He served as vicar for the Warren-Centerline Vicariate. In 1972, he was appointed pastor of St. Cyprian's Parish, Riverview (1972-76), then Sacred Heart Parish, Roseville (1976-1979), and St. Lucy Parish, St. Clair Shores (1979-1982).

At the invitation of Archbishop (later Cardinal) Edmund Szoka, he began graduate studies at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. earning a license in canon law (J.C.L) in 1984. Upon returning to Detroit, he served as judicial vicar of the Metropolitan Tribunal from 1984 to 1989. In addition, he served as moderator of the curia for the archdiocese from 1986 to 1990. In 1990, he was designated a prelate of honor with the title of monsignor by His Holiness Pope John Paul II. In 1994, he became a member of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher.

In 1990, Bishop Hurley was appointed pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows Parish, Farmington, where he served until November 2003. From 1988 to 1995, and again from 2002 to 2005, he served as delegate of the cardinal for clergy misconduct issues. From 1995 to 2001, he was the cardinal's delegate and project manager for the construction of the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center in Washington, D.C.



DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

Bishop Hurley was ordained the 22nd auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Detroit on August 12, 2003. He was named the bishop of the Titular See of Cunavia. Bishop Hurley had responsibility for the Northwest Region of the archdiocese encompassing Oakland and Lapeer Counties.

His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI appointed him bishop of Grand Rapids on June 21, 2005. Bishop Hurley was installed as the eleventh bishop of the Diocese of Grand Rapids on August 4, 2005 at the Cathedral of Saint Andrew.

In 2007, Bishop Hurley initiated the process that consolidated three separate social service organizations into Catholic Charities West Michigan and established FAITH Grand Rapids magazine to evangelize, connect and inform the faithful of West Michigan. Also in that year, Bishop Hurley, along with the assistance of many supporters, orchestrated the development and construction of Cathedral Square, the 11.5-acre campus in Grand Rapids which brings together all diocesan services, along with Catholic Charities West Michigan, into one facility. Cathedral Square has become a central location for diocesan meetings and events, helping to unite Catholics across the diocese.

Recognizing the need to assure a strong and vibrant Church in the 11-county diocese and establish a well-defined course for the years to come, in 2009 Bishop Hurley launched the “Our Faith, Our Future” pastoral planning process. The three-year initiative proceeded through input from pastors, principals and parish leaders and resulted in reallocation of resources within the diocese to allow the Church in West Michigan to be better prepared for future challenges.

During Bishop Hurley’s nearly eight year-long appointment as bishop of Grand Rapids, the diocese also saw increasing success in its priestly vocations program, which expanded to 21 men enrolled in seminary in 2012 with three priestly ordinations this year.

As required by canon law, Bishop Hurley submitted his letter of resignation to Pope Benedict on the occasion of his 75th birthday in May 2012. On April 18, 2013, the Vatican announced that Pope Francis had appointed Bishop-elect David J. Walkowiak, a priest of the Diocese of Cleveland, Ohio, to succeed Bishop Hurley. Bishop Hurley served as apostolic administrator of the diocese,



DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

functioning as bishop through June 18, 2013. After that date, he officially retired and became bishop emeritus.

Following his retirement, Bishop Hurley returned to the Archdiocese of Detroit assisting with work in the chancery and at parishes.

On Oct. 17, 2018, Pope Francis appointed Bishop Hurley apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Saginaw, following the sudden death of Most Reverend Joseph Cistone, bishop of Saginaw. Bishop Hurley served the Diocese of Saginaw until the installation of Bishop Robert Gruss on July 26, 2019.

On June 23, 2020, the Diocese of Gaylord announced that Bishop Hurley had been appointed by Pope Francis to serve as apostolic administrator of Gaylord. The appointment was subsequent to the appointment and June 23rd installation of the Most Reverend Bishop Steven J. Raica as the fifth bishop of the Diocese of Birmingham, Alabama. Bishop Raica had served as the fifth bishop of the Diocese of Gaylord since 2014. As the newly appointed apostolic administrator, Bishop Hurley served as the provisional shepherd by addressing the spiritual needs of the faithful of the diocese and governing the diocese during this time of transition until the sixth bishop of Gaylord is appointed by the Holy See.

Bishop Hurley served the Diocese of Gaylord until the ordination and installation of Bishop Jeffrey J. Walsh as the sixth bishop of Gaylord on March 4, 2022.