

ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA

[Home](#) [Administration](#) [Parishes](#) [Communications](#) [Education](#) [Human Services](#) [Vocations](#) [Giving](#)



[Cardinal Rigali](#) [Auxiliary Bishops](#) [Catholic Life](#) [Catholic Links](#) [Children and Youth Protection](#) [Clergy Employment](#) [Evangelization](#) [Pastoral Planning](#) [Respect Life](#) [Tribunal](#) [Victim Assistance](#) [Youth and Young Adults](#)

Anthony Cardinal Bevilacqua

Biography

Anthony Joseph Bevilacqua was born in Brooklyn, New York on June 17, 1923. He was one of 11 children born to Luigi and Maria Bevilacqua. Following his 1943 graduation from Cathedral College, he attended Immaculate Conception Seminary in Huntington, New York. There he completed the six years of philosophy and theology requirements and was ordained on June 11, 1949 at St. James Cathedral, Brooklyn.

In 1956, he received his Doctorate in Canon Law (J.C.D.) Summa Cum Laude from Rome's Gregorian University. In 1962, he received a Masters of Arts degree in Political Science (M.A.) from Columbia University in New York. In 1975 Father Bevilacqua received a degree in Civil Law (J.D.) from St. John's University Law School in Queens, New York.

In 1971, the Bishop of Brooklyn appointed Father Bevilacqua as the Founding Director of the Catholic Migration and Refugee Office. In 1976, he was named Honorary Prelate (Monsignor) to His Holiness Pope Paul VI. Also in 1976, he was named Chancellor of the Brooklyn Diocese. He remained Chancellor of the Diocese and Director of its Migration and Refugee Office until 1983. From 1968 to 1980, Msgr. Bevilacqua was visiting Professor of Canon Law at the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception in Huntington, New York. From 1977-1980, he also taught immigration law as an Adjunct Professor of Law at St. John's University Law School.

On November 24, 1980, he was ordained a Bishop. He served as Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Brooklyn. Pope John Paul II appointed him Bishop of the Diocese of Pittsburgh in 1983.

On December 8, 1987, it was announced that Pope John Paul II had appointed Bishop Bevilacqua as Archbishop of Philadelphia. His installation took place on February 11, 1988.

Three years later, on May 29, 1991, Pope John Paul II announced that Archbishop Bevilacqua's elevation to the College of Cardinals would take place in a consistory on June 28, 1991.

Since coming to Philadelphia, Cardinal Bevilacqua made spiritual renewal of the faithful a priority and undertook an active pastoral ministry. He regularly visited parishes, schools, nursing homes and other institutions throughout the archdiocese as well as people of all faiths through his visits to state hospitals, prisons, Christian churches and synagogues. Cardinal Bevilacqua was the first and only Cardinal in the world to host a live weekly radio call-in program, entitled Live with Cardinal Bevilacqua, which aired on WZZD-AM in Philadelphia from 1995-2000. Cardinal Bevilacqua also made regular appearances on national and local television and radio programs.

On May 11, 2002, Cardinal Bevilacqua received an Honorary Degree Doctor of Humane Letters from Gwynedd Mercy College (Pennsylvania). On September 12, 2000, Cardinal Bevilacqua was awarded the President's Medal by St. John's University (New York) and the St. Thomas More Award for Outstanding Moral Leadership by St. John's University School of Law and Alumni Association. Cardinal Bevilacqua previously served as a member of numerous Congregations and Councils. He also served as Chairman and member of various committees of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Since 1988, Cardinal Bevilacqua has been Ecclesiastical Advisor to Legatus, an international organization of Catholic leaders from the business community. On September 1, 2000, Cardinal Bevilacqua was chosen Chairman of The Papal Foundation, an American foundation which assists the Pope in meeting the charitable needs of the Holy See. Cardinal Bevilacqua is also Honorary Chairman and member of the Board of Trustees of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land.

Cardinal Bevilacqua is admitted to practice as a civil lawyer before the Courts of New York State, the Courts of the State of Pennsylvania and the U.S. Supreme Court.

On June 17, 1998, Cardinal Bevilacqua reached the age of 75 and, according to Canon Law, submitted his letter of resignation to Pope John Paul II. Cardinal Bevilacqua was asked by the Holy Father to continue as Archbishop of Philadelphia until further notice. On July 15, 2003, his resignation was accepted by the Holy Father, at which time he was appointed Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. He remained Apostolic Administrator until the installation of his successor on October 7, 2003.

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