

The Most Reverend William Edward Lori, S.T.D., was installed as the Fourth Bishop of the Diocese of Bridgeport, CT, on March 19, 2001.

Born in Louisville, KY, in 1951, Bishop Lori obtained a Bachelor's Degree from the Seminary of Saint Pius X in Erlanger, KY, in 1973, and a Master's Degree from Mount Saint Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, MD, in 1977. In 1982, Bishop Lori received his Doctorate in Sacred Theology (S.T.D.) from The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. Bishop Lori was ordained to the priesthood for the Archdiocese of Washington by His Eminence William Cardinal Baum in 1977 in Saint Matthew Cathedral in Washington, DC. His first assignment was as Associate Pastor of Saint Joseph Parish in Landover, MD. Thereafter, he served as Secretary to James Cardinal Hickey, Chancellor, Moderator of the Curia, and Vicar General.

In 1995, Bishop Lori was ordained to the episcopate as Auxiliary Bishop of Washington and Titular Bishop of Bulla. Bishop Lori is Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, CT, and past Chairman of the Board of Trustees of The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. He is also a member of the Mt. St. Mary University Board. Bishop Lori is the former Chairman and current member of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Doctrine, Chairman of the USCCB ad-hoc Committee on Universities and Colleges, a member of the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities, and the USCCB ad-hoc Committee for the Defense of Marriage.

Just months after being appointed Bishop of Bridgeport, Bishop Lori was confronted with two major crises; the 9/11 terrorist attacks that directly affected many Fairfield County families, and the revelation of sexual abuse within the Church. In each case, Bishop Lori provided the leadership and compassion necessary to bring healing. He responded immediately to the abuse crisis by removing offenders and creating Safe Environment policies to protect children. As a result, over 90,000 adults and children have received training on Child Sexual Abuse Awareness and Prevention. The Diocese has also conducted over 25,000 criminal background checks, while also distributing more than 45,000 Stay Safe guides for parents in order to safeguard students in all environments.

In 2002, in recognition of his role as an emerging leader on the Church's response to the sexual misconduct crisis, Bishop Lori was appointed to the USCCB Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Abuse. He was instrumental in drafting the landmark Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. As one of four U.S. bishops on a special Mixed Commission, Bishop Lori journeyed to the Vatican to seek approval for the "Essential Norms" of the Charter, which is now particular law for the Catholic Church in the United States to ensure that no one who works for the Catholic Church will ever pose a threat of any kind to any person, young or old.

In April, 2011, Bishop Lori was the keynote speaker at the National Catholic Prayer Breakfast in Washington, D. C., where he paid tribute to John Paul II and urged Catholics to defend his legacy of defending religious liberty and human dignity. In a speech widely reported across the U.S., Bishop Lori told the gathering that religious freedom is not "a carve-out" granted by the state, but an inalienable right. He also called for the protection of "conscience rights" for health care providers.

In 2005, he was elected Supreme Chaplain of the Knights of Columbus, where he has the responsibility of overseeing the spiritual welfare of the Order's 1.8 million members and their families. In his extensive writing and speaking on behalf of the Knights, Bishop Lori has focused on the spiritual vision of the Venerable Father Michael J. McGivney, the Founder of the Knights of Columbus. Bishop Lori is also writing a series of monthly articles in Columbia Magazine on the compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Additionally, he has helped guide many spiritual initiatives of the Order, most notably the Order's third Eucharistic Congress held in Chicago in 2005, and the International Marian Congress and Guadalupe Festival held in Phoenix in 2009. He has also worked closely with the Supreme Knight in highlighting the role of Knights of Columbus chaplains at every level of the Order. As a result, Bishop Lori was honored at the April 10, 2010 at the Supreme Board of Directors, meeting in Philadelphia in a resolution that expressing gratitude for Bishop Lori's contributions to the Order and the Church.



Diocesan Initiatives & Apostolic Leadership

As Bishop of Bridgeport, Bishop Lori has launched new initiatives in support of Catholic Education, Vocations, Catholic Charities, Pastoral Services, and other ministries, while improving Financial Stewardship. He has also worked collaboratively with the laity to increase participation and foster lay leadership throughout the Diocese.

In 2004, Bishop Lori, joined by lay leaders, announced a major restructuring of Catholic Education in the Diocese. Changes in the governance, funding, and curricula for the 37 Diocesan Catholic Schools, which educate more than 11,000 children, have led to a renaissance in Catholic education-- and a record 12 schools earning United States Department of Education National Blue Ribbon designation, which recognizes that Diocesan student scores rank in the top 10% of all schools, public or private, across the nation.

Working collaboratively with school officials and lay leaders, Bishop Lori has also sought to ensure that the dream of a Catholic education is a reality for children in the inner city. Most notably, the formation of the Cathedral Education Cluster in 2004 has worked to secure the future of the six Catholic elementary schools serving the poor of inner city Bridgeport. Likewise, the Bishop worked with lay leaders to find a permanent home for St. Catherine Academy, the

unique Diocesan schools for children and young people with multiple disabilities and special needs.

Bishop Lori's commitment to Catholic Charities has led to a new generation of programs, including the development of Merton Homes on the Thomas Merton Center campus in inner city Bridgeport. In 2010, Catholic Charities dedicated 22 supportive-housing apartment for families at risk of homelessness. The agency now provides much needed housing to 225 individuals. Its three major nutrition programs and food pantries serve over 1.2 million meals annual to the working poor, homeless and elderly.

In 2006, the Diocese launched "Following in the Footsteps of Christ," a pastoral plan for evangelization that brought together clergy, religious and laity in prayer, collaboration, and renewed zeal for communicating the Gospel in Fairfield County in parishes. The Pastoral Plan served as a roadmap by identifying five key areas to make the Gospel better known: greater and more devout participation in the liturgy; greater support for family life in the diocese, especially those preparing for marriage or living the vocation of marriage and family coupled with loving protection of human life at all its stages; more effective Christian formation for young people, helping them to participate in the Church's life, and to discover the vocation God has in mind for them; enhanced adult formation, helping adults in the challenges of their personal and professional lives to deepen their relationship with Christ and to share Gospel values more effectively in their daily lives; and even greater and more loving service to those in need, especially the poor, the sick, those neglected by our society and those also who are spiritually poor.

The plan inspired youth, revitalized adult catechesis, and invited laity into greater levels of participation in Church and parish life. Its mission of evangelization has been expressed in many ways, including a renewal of youth ministry including an annual "Fan the Fire" Youth Rally which inspired the young people of the Diocese; a Saint Augustine Lecture Series. In particular, Pastoral Services have been strengthened with a thoroughly revised Marriage preparation Program, a unique Ministry for People with Developmental Disability, and the restructured St. Cyril of Jerusalem Program for Catechesis, which introduce an online approach featuring a new DVD series. Working with catechetical leaders, the Diocese also recently organized a highly successful Catechetical Congress that drew over 700 men and women to Sacred Heart University.

In 2007, working with Diocesan Finance Council members, senior Pastors, Parish Business Managers and staff, Bishop Lori led the Diocese into a new era of administrative and financial practice in parishes. With installation of web-based information technologies, internal controls, a clear chart of accounts and streamlined business processes, the Diocese enhanced accountability and transparency in all 87 parishes. The Parish Administration and Finance Manual, published in 2008, has since become a model for other dioceses across the nation. Parishes with incomes exceeding \$400,000 are reviewed by external auditing firms; quarterly and annual financial reports to parishioners are also mandated. A similar system has since been institute for Catholic schools throughout the Diocese. The Diocese also worked to keep administrative costs low by taking measures to contain and drive down the costs of health care insurance while ensuring its employees receive excellent family coverage. It also froze the defined benefit lay pension plan and institute a defined contribution plan.

In 2009, “Be Reconciled to God,” the Diocese launched its first campaign to promote the Sacrament of Reconciliation in all 87 parishes during the Season of Lent. The Lenten Confessions Campaign has led many thousands to return to the sacrament at any Catholic Church in Fairfield County on any Tuesday evening during the penitential season.



Bishop Lori’s apostolic ministry in Bridgeport has been marked by particular emphasis on vocations, seeing 35 priests ordained and having 39 seminarians presently in formation. Saint John Fisher Seminary Residence in Stamford is a thriving house of discernment and formation, working closely with the Permanent Deacon Program. Additionally, there are currently nineteen men in the Deacon Formation Program.

Bishop Lori has also reached out to the priests of the Diocese by convening yearly Convocation for Priests, a three-day event that serves as a retreat, academic conference and opportunity for renewal and reflection. The yearly convocation focuses on the priestly life in order to deepen the spirituality and fraternity of Diocesan priests. The launch of the “Good Leaders, Good Shepherds” program in 2008 has also given priests the opportunity for personal and pastoral growth and a deepening of their ministries.

He has also shown a special love for the role and witness of consecrated women in the Church, having welcomed into the Diocese of Bridgeport eight orders of women religious including the Missionaries of Charity; the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary; the Institute of the Servants of the Lord and Virgin of Matara; and a new religious institute, the Dominican Sisters of Our Lady of the Springs of Bridgeport. In 2004, Bishop Lori dedicated “Villa Maria Guadalupe” in Stamford, CT. The property was purchased by the Knights of Columbus. Bishop Lori invited the Sisters of Life, a religious community dedicated to protecting and advancing the sacredness of all human life, to offer pro-life retreats for individuals and families.

In his writing, teaching and advocacy, Bishop Lori has been a courageous voice for religious liberty, having joined with the bishops of Connecticut in protecting the apostolic governance of the Catholic Church in averting the legalization of physician-assisted suicide; and in amending the state's misguided same sex marriage law to respect the freedom of conscience of Catholic institutions. Most notably, joined by Archbishop Henry Mansell, he led a successful rally on the steps of the State Capitol in 2009 to oppose state interference in governance of the Church. His passion and eloquence that day led to national coverage of this important challenge to religious liberty. When the State of Connecticut Office of State Ethics then tried to penalize the Diocese for its role in the successful rally, Bishop Lori filed a federal civil rights lawsuit against the state agency. The State Attorney General refused to defend the action of the state agency, which led to the state's withdrawal of its threatened investigation of the Church. Bishop Lori later reflected on this experience in "Let Freedom Ring," his widely praised and reprinted Pastoral Letter on the public role of religion and the rights of conscience, which was widely reprinted throughout the U.S.

Bishop Lori has also worked tirelessly to expand resources for the Diocese through his leadership of the Annual Bishop's Appeal, which funds a wide range of ministries including Catholic Schools, Catholic Charities, Vocations, Pastoral Services, and so other programs connected with preaching the Gospel serving those in need.

On September 29 2011, New York Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan, President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) named Bishop William E. Lori, to chair a new Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty to address growing concerns over the erosion of freedom of religion in America. Support for the subcommittee work includes two full-time staff at the USCCB, a lawyer expert in the area of religious freedom law, and a lobbyist who will handle both religious liberty and marriage issues. Bishop Lori's appointment was made in recognition of his defense of religious liberty in his 2010 Pastoral Letter, "Let Freedom Ring," which earned national attention, and his successful leadership in the fight against Senate Bill 1098, which would have permitted state interference in the governance of Catholic Churches in Connecticut. Bishop Lori said he welcomed "the opportunity to work with fellow bishops and men and women of expertise in constitutional law so as to defend and promote the God-given gift of religious liberty recognized and guaranteed by the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the United States."

On October 26, serving as new head of the Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), Bishop Lori called on Congress to defend the American legacy of religious liberty during a hearing before the Subcommittee on the Constitution of the House of Representatives Judiciary Committee. Bishop Lori noted several recent actions by government entities that mark the erosion of the freedom of religion, often called the nation's "First Freedom." These actions include a health coverage mandate that would coerce employers to pay for services for which they have moral objections, such as abortion, sterilization and contraceptives, and government contracting decisions that exclude agencies unless they provide such services. He called for passage of three bills before Congress: the Protect Life Act (H.R. 358), the Abortion Non-Discrimination Act (H.R. 361), and the Respect for Rights of Conscience Act (H.R. 1179).

"All three go a long way toward guaranteeing religious liberty and freedom of conscience for religious employers, health insurers, and health care providers," he said.

He also urged the House to reject the Respect for Marriage Act (H.R. 1116), which would repeal the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). DOMA, which was signed by President Clinton in 1996, defines marriage as between one man and one woman for purposes of federal law and leaves states free to define marriage as they see fit.

Religious liberty "is not merely a privilege that the government grants us and so may take away at will. Instead, religious liberty is inherent in our very humanity, hard-wired into each and every one of us by our Creator," he said. "Thus government has a perennial obligation to acknowledge and protect religious liberty as fundamental, no matter the moral and political trends of the moment," he told Congress.

On Monday November 14, Bishop Lori addressed the assembled United States bishops at their annual Fall meeting in Baltimore. "There is no religious liberty if we are not free to express our faith in the public square and if we are not free to act on that faith through works of education, health care and charity," Bishop Lori said in his address to the bishops. In a speech widely reported across the nation, Bishop Lori warned of the dangers of treating religion "merely as a private matter between an individual and his or her God." Citing an "aggressive secularism" as a competing system of belief, Bishop Lori said that recent court decisions and proposed regulations treat religion "as a divisive and disruptive force better kept out of public life," which the government continues to encroach on individual lives. He called for interfaith collaboration to defend religious liberty and conscience rights in our culture.