



Catholic Diocese of Columbus

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News

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POPE FRANCIS APPOINTS FATHER EARL K. FERNANDES 13TH BISHOP OF COLUMBUS

NEWS CONFERENCE TO BE HELD AT CATHOLIC CENTER (197 EAST GAY ST., COLUMBUS) AT 10:30 A.M. TODAY



COLUMBUS - The Vatican announced today that Pope Francis has appointed the Reverend Earl K. Fernandes, a priest of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, as the 13th Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Columbus.

He succeeds the Most Reverend Robert J. Brennan, who was installed as the 8th Bishop of Brooklyn November 30, 2021. Father Fernandes will be ordained

a bishop of the Catholic Church and installed as Bishop of Columbus Tuesday, May 31, 2022.

Details about his ordination and installation will be released in the near future.

“Grateful to Almighty God and to the Blessed Virgin Mary for my vocation and recognizing my own unworthiness, I accepted, with fear and trepidation but also with joy, the appointment by Pope Francis to serve as the 13th bishop of the Diocese of Columbus,” Bishop-elect Fernandes said. “I thank His Holiness, as well His Excellency Archbishop Christophe Pierre, the Apostolic Nuncio, for giving me the opportunity to proclaim the joy of the Gospel in the Diocese of Columbus, the capital of our beloved state of Ohio.

“I look forward to meeting the People of God – the priests, deacons, religious, and lay faithful of the Diocese of Columbus – and to collaborating with them in announcing the joyful Good News and building the Kingdom of God. I ask for your prayers, not only for me but also for our Diocese, that the Holy Spirit may enkindle in all of us the fire of His Divine Love. May God grant me the grace to serve His people well and to be an ardent yet gentle shepherd, whose heart is formed after the Heart of Jesus.”

“We will miss Fr. Fernandes’ incredible intellect, unflagging energy, and concern for all people, but know that these traits will serve him well as he expands his ministry to shepherd the faithful people of Columbus,” said the Most Reverend Dennis M. Schnurr, Archbishop of Cincinnati. “Bishop-elect Fernandes has ministered to the people of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati in many ways since his ordination to the priesthood. Over the past 20 years, he has served as a dean, pastor, parochial vicar, seminary academic dean, associate professor, high school teacher, and retreat leader, as well as being a regular contributor to *The Catholic Telegraph* and other publications. Through all his assignments, Father Fernandes has been an ever-joyful witness to the goodness, beauty and truth of the Catholic faith. His lasting legacy in the Archdiocese will be the impact he has had on our people. Please join me in congratulating Bishop-elect Fernandes on this joyous news. Let us keep our beloved brother in prayer as he starts this new ministry.”

“Pope Francis’ announcement today appointing the Reverend Earl Fernandes as the 13th Bishop of Columbus is great news indeed,” said Bishop Robert J. Brennan. “I couldn’t be happier for him and the Church in Columbus. In my time in Ohio, I came to know Bishop-elect Fernandes as a neighbor and through his service on the Board of the Pontifical College Josephinum. He will bring his many talents, a deep faith, and a genuine love for the Lord to a Church that is vibrant with that same love for the Lord. I join the Diocese of Columbus in prayer

for their new shepherd, confident that Bishop-elect Fernandes will be as happy as I was and blessed in his ministry.”

“Today’s news is a joy-filled moment for all of us here in the Diocese of Columbus,” said Monsignor Stephan J. Moloney, Diocesan Administrator of the Diocese of Columbus. “We look forward to welcoming Bishop-elect Fernandes to our Catholic family here in central and south-central Ohio and embracing him as our new bishop. He comes to us from the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and brings with him his many gifts, especially a deep desire to love and serve the Lord and all God’s people, not just here but everywhere. We know and trust that Bishop-elect Fernandes will be a wonderful, deeply caring shepherd for all of us here in the Diocese of Columbus, and I know he will find the warmest of welcomes from his new diocesan family.”

Fr. Fernandes, 49, is pastor of St. Ignatius of Loyola Church in Cincinnati, Ohio. From 2016-2019, he was a member of the staff of the Apostolic Nunciature in Washington, D.C. From 2008-2016, he was the Dean of the Athenaeum of Ohio/Mount Saint Mary’s Seminary of the West in Cincinnati and an associate professor of moral theology. From 2008-2014, he was a weekend assistant at Guardian Angels Church in Cincinnati, and from 2014-2016, he was the administrator of Sacred Heart Church in Cincinnati. Fr. Fernandes served as Parochial Vicar at Holy Angels Church and taught religion at Lehman Catholic High School in Sidney, Ohio from 2002-2004, prior to being sent for further studies in Rome in 2004. He was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati by the Most Reverend Daniel Pilarczyk on May 18, 2002.

Fr. Fernandes is a member of the Board of Trustees at the Pontifical College Josephinum, Columbus, Ohio, as well as the Board of Trustees of the Pregnancy Center East in Cincinnati, where he has served as a member of the Advisory Board since 2008. He is also a member of the National Catholic Bioethics Center. From 2012-2016, he was a member of the Executive Committee of the National Association of Catholic Theological Schools. Since 2012, he has

been a Knight of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre. In 2014, Fr. Fernandes concluded a three-year term on the board of the Starfire Council of Greater Cincinnati, which assists disabled persons.

He has given presentations, talks, and retreats around the country and has published articles in three collections of essays published by the Institute for Priestly Formation in Omaha, Nebraska, which also published a book authored by him in 2014. Father Fernandes' scholarly essays have also appeared in *Seminary Journal*, *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, *the Linacre Quarterly*, and *Journal of the National Apostolate for Inclusion Ministry*. His articles in the latter two addressed issues of persons with disabilities.

Fr. Fernandes is a native of Toledo, Ohio, the fourth of five boys, and the son of Indian immigrants. He earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Toledo and came to Cincinnati to study at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine before discerning a vocation to the priesthood. Fr. Fernandes holds a doctorate in moral theology from the Alphonsian Academy in Rome, Italy. He is an avid reader and writer and has a particularly strong interest in education, culture, and languages. Most of all, he enjoys people.