

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington

DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON

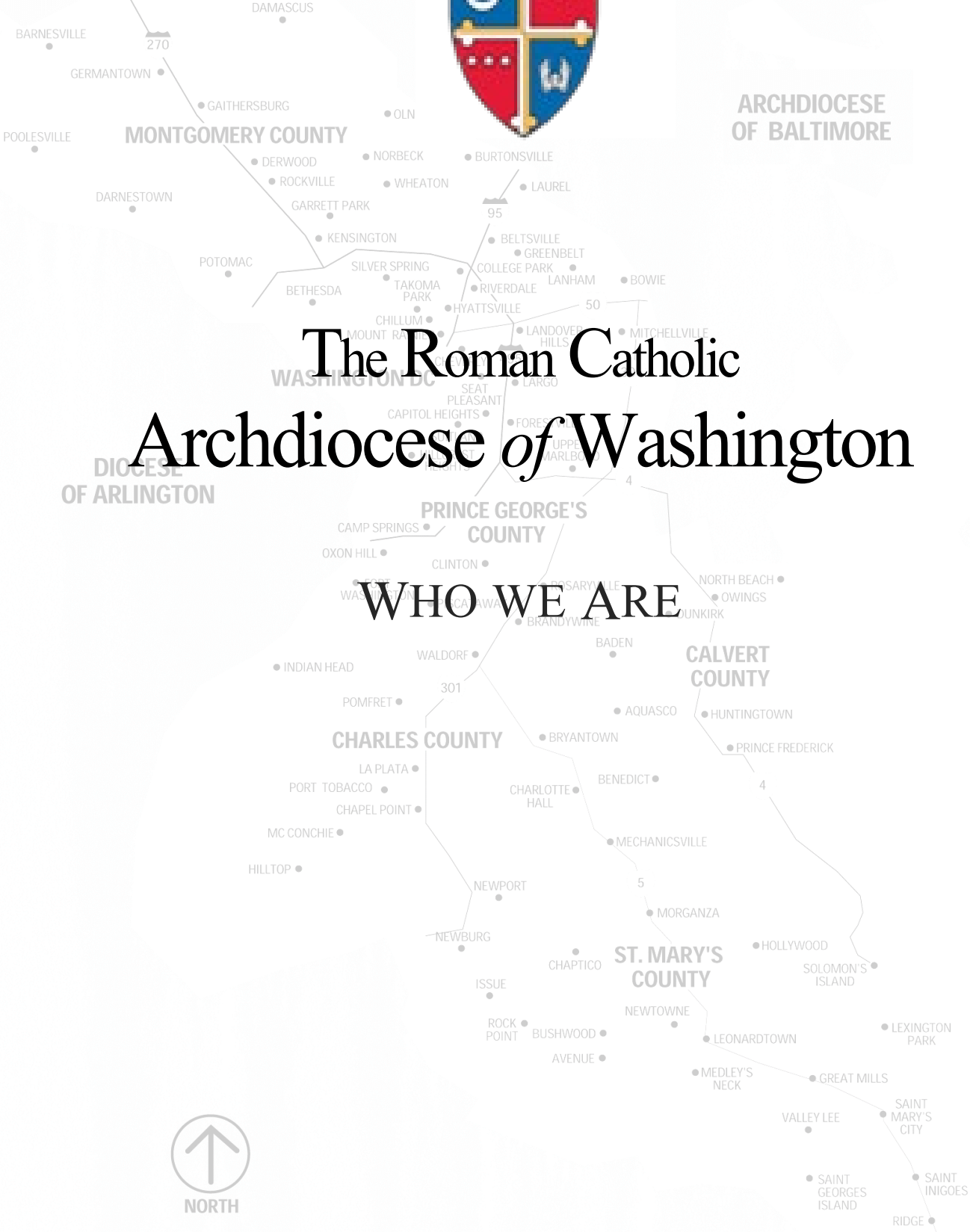
WHO WE ARE

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

CALVERT COUNTY

CHARLES COUNTY

ST. MARY'S COUNTY



History of The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington

The history of the Catholic Church can be traced back to the first settlers of the colony of Maryland. Jesuit Father Andrew White celebrated the first Mass held in the English-speaking colonies, on the-shores of St. Clement's Island, in modern day St Mary's County, in 1634. Fr White and two companions had traveled with the original founders of Maryland on the *Ark* and the *Dove*.

Maryland was founded by the Lords of Baltimore as a haven for religious toleration. In 1649, the Legislature passed the Maryland Toleration Act, the first legislation enacted for religious freedom in America. With the expulsion of King James II from England during the Glorious Revolution in 1689, all colonies in the New World came under the jurisdiction of the crown. Religious freedom as it been in Maryland for most of the seventeenth century was abolished. Catholics were barred from public office and harassed by the courts and other legal authorities. In 1704, all Catholic chapels and schools were ordered closed by the Maryland Council.

Two years later in 1706 after lobbying from prominent Catholics in England, Queen Anne gave permission for Mass to be offered in private homes in Maryland. This action allowed for the continuance of the Catholic faith privately. The use of private house chapels instead a freestanding churches defined the life of the priests and lay people

in Maryland for nearly a century. Commonly referred to as the circuit rides, priests would spend their time traveling between one or more private homes and chapels. Many of these private chapels continued to exist after the establishment of the Archdiocese of Baltimore in 1789 and several became the sites of parishes that still exist today within The Romans Catholic Archdiocese of Washington.

John Carroll, a Jesuit priest who was born in Upper Marlboro, was appointed the first Bishop of Baltimore. Carroll also was the first Bishop of the United States and initially oversaw all the Catholic priests and churches in the fledgling nation. In 1808 Pope Pius VII created the Dioceses of New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Bardstown, Kentucky and at the same time raised Baltimore to a metropolitan see with Carroll as Archbishop. More dioceses would be created throughout the nineteenth century as the United States expanded west.

The Jesuits had five large estates in Maryland with four of the five located within the boundaries of The Romans Catholic Archdiocese of Washington. Three of these plantations are the sites of modern-day Archdiocesan parishes. It has been estimated that the Jesuits owned as many as 500 enslaved men, women and children in Maryland by 1820 making them one of the largest slaveholders in the United States. The Manors incurred increasing debt in the first

quarter of the nineteenth century and to counteract that financial loss, the Jesuits began to sell portions of lands and small groups of enslaved persons.

In 1838, the Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus sold their remaining 272 enslaved men, women and children for \$115,000. This equates to just under three million dollars today by one calculation. The money was used to settle the pension debt with the Archbishop of Baltimore, who had received a stipend from the Manors since the time of John Carroll, pay off the debts incurred during a building campaign at Georgetown University, and to support the training of new Jesuits.

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington was created in 1939 from part of the Archdiocese of Baltimore. Originally encompassing only the City of Washington. Michael Curley, the sitting Archbishop of Baltimore became by decree of Pope Pius XII the Archbishop of Baltimore-Washington in 1939. Eight years later after Curley's death, then Msgr. Patrick A. O'Boyle was named the first resident Archbishop of Washington. At this time Calvert, Charles, Montgomery, Prince George's and St. Mary's Counties, Maryland, joined the city of Washington to create the new archdiocese.

At the time of his appointment the new Archbishop O'Boyle, a native of Scranton, PA, had served as the Director of Catholic War Relief Services since 1941. He came to

a new diocese with little administrative structure and also built or established nearly 40 parishes in his time as Archbishop. His first initiative was to desegregate all Catholic schools and parishes, which he did quietly and persistently over eight years. O'Boyle worked closely with the Catholic Interracial Council of Washington and in 1963 created the Office of Urban Renewal to assist in justice work within the city. Because of his work, he was invited to give the invocation at the Lincoln Memorial during the 1963 March on Washington. Patrick O'Boyle was elevated to the College of Cardinals in 1967.

The turmoil that world saw in 1968 was particularly felt in the Archdiocese. The April 4th assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was followed by days of rioting that left large sections of the city of Washington destroyed. Cardinal O'Boyle dedicated the whole of the Annual Archdiocesan Appeal for that year to assist in rebuilding the city. On July 25th Pope Paul VI promulgated his encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. The controversy that followed culminated in the open descent of more than 50 priests and theologians within the Archdiocese with the canonical case that affirmed O'Boyle's handling of the matter only resolved in 1971. O'Boyle retired in 1973.

Bishop William W. Baum, of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau succeeded Cardinal O'Boyle in 1973 and was named Cardinal in 1976. Baum continued the social and racial justice efforts begun by creating

the Secretariat of Black Catholic and the Secretariat of Spanish Catholics in 1974 to look to the temporal and spiritual needs of these populations. He welcomed Pope John Paul II on his first papal visit to the United States in 1979. Cardinal Baum was transferred to the Roman Curia in 1980, where he served until retirement in 2001.

James A. Hickey, a Michigan native who served as Rector of the North American College, was appointed Archbishop of Washington in 1980 and elevated to the College of Cardinals in 1988. Under Cardinal Hickey's leadership the internal structure of the Archdiocese was reorganized. He created the first formalized policies, most prominently the first policies for Child Protection and Safe Environment in 1986, and established a permanent home for the offices of the Archdiocese on Eastern Avenue in Hyattsville.

All of the social services organizations in the Archdiocese had been reorganized under the umbrella of Associated Catholic Charities in 1978. Cardinal Hickey took advantage of this realignment to further expand services where the city needed them most. Hickey invited Mother Teresa and her Missionaries of Charity to the Archdiocese where they founded Gift of Peace convent to care for terminal patients with AIDS. In addition, Cardinal Hickey founded the Archdiocesan Health Care Network (1983) and Archdiocesan Legal Network (1989), which provide access to legal and health services for those in need. The archdiocese also grew in diversity his

tenure, with Mass celebrated in over 20 languages, including Chinese, French, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

In November 2000, Cardinal Hickey retired. His successor, then-Newark Archbishop Theodore E. McCarrick, was installed in January 2001 and served until his retirement in 2006.

In May 2006 Pope Benedict XVI appointed then-Pittsburgh Bishop Donald W. Wuerl as Archbishop of Washington. Wuerl was known for his catechetical and teaching ministry and for his efforts to strengthen Catholic education. He introduced a successful initiative on the Sacrament of Reconciliation, "The Light is On," that quickly became a model for other dioceses. He hosted Pope Benedict XVI during his historic visit to Washington, D.C. in April 2008 where the Holy Father celebrated Mass for nearly 50,000 people at Nationals Park. Two years later Archbishop Wuerl was created a cardinal. In 2011, Cardinal Wuerl opened the Saint John Paul II Seminary for The Romans Catholic Archdiocese of Washington. In September 2015 Cardinal Wuerl hosted Pope Francis during his apostolic visit to Washington.

The Romans Catholic Archdiocese of Washington marked its 75th anniversary in 2014 and in the same year held its first Archdiocesan Synod. The statutes and recommendations were based on more than 15,000 suggestions collected from the faithful through the listening sessions.

Who We Are

Anniversary celebrations also included a Mass on St. Clement's Island, as well as at the restored brick chapel in St. Mary's County.

On April 4, 2019, Pope Francis appointed Wilton Gregory to be the seventh Archbishop of Washington. He was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Chicago on May 9, 1973, and has previously served as auxiliary bishop of Chicago, bishop of the Diocese of Belleville, IL, and archbishop of the Archdiocese of Atlanta. Archbishop Gregory has served in many leading roles in the U.S. church, including president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), and as member of the USCCB's Executive and Administrative Committees, the Administrative Board, the Committee on Doctrine, and the U.S. Catholic Conference Committee on International Policy. He has written extensively on church issues, including pastoral statements on the death penalty, euthanasia/physician-assisted suicide and has published numerous articles on the subject of liturgy, particularly in the African-American community.

Today, The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington is home to over 680,000 Catholics. Its 92 Catholic schools educate approximately 66,000 children while service agencies, including Catholic Charities and Victory Housing, have made the archdiocese one of the largest private social service providers in the region. Catholics are finding new opportunities to deepen

their faith through parish formation, evangelization efforts, and small faith communities. Although diverse in nationality, Catholics of The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington share a common faith and a commitment to reflect Christ in the world through prayer, education and service.

Statistical Profile of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington

(Data drawn from 2024 Official Catholic Directory)

Personnel

Retired Cardinal Archbishop	2
Auxiliary Bishops (including retired)	3
Number of Diocesan Priests	277
Religious Priests in Diocese	296
Extern Priests in Diocese	151
Permanent Deacons in Diocese	205
Religious Brothers	209
Religious Sisters	371

Parishes

Parishes	140
Missions and Communities	9
Basilica	1

Charitable Institutions

Catholic Hospitals	3
Total Assisted	415,198
Health Care Centers	68
Total Assisted	1,341,589
Homes for the Aged	29
Total Assisted	2,712
Day Care Center	13
Total Assisted	826
Specialized Homes	20
Total Assisted	13,415
Special Centers for Social Services	65
Total Assisted	242,598
Residential Care of Disabled	6
Total Assisted	112

Educational

Seminaries, Diocesan	3
Students from This Diocese	35
Students from Other Diocese	67
Diocesan Students in Other Seminaries	34
Seminaries, Religious	13
Students Religious	138
Total Seminarians	207
Colleges and Universities	3
Total Students	28,787
High Schools, Diocesan and Parish	2
Total Students	767
High Schools, Private	16
Total Students	9,119
Total Students	14,090
Elementary Schools, Private	7
Total Students	2,192
Non-residential Schools for the Disabled	1
Total Students	44
Catechesis/Religious Education:	
High School Students	1,522
Elementary Students	15,841
Total Students under Catholic Instruction	72,569
Teachers in the Diocese:	
Priests	44
Brothers	121
Sisters	148
Lay Teachers	3,592

Archbishop of Washington

His Eminence Robert Cardinal McElroy



Ordained to the Priesthood
April 2, 1980

Ordained Auxiliary Bishop of San Francisco
September 7, 2010

Installed Sixth Bishop of San Diego
April 15, 2015

On May 29, 2022, Pope Francis named Bishop McElroy and nineteen other new cardinals from around the world. McElroy was elevated by Pope Francis to the College of Cardinals in an August 27, 2022 consistory in Rome.

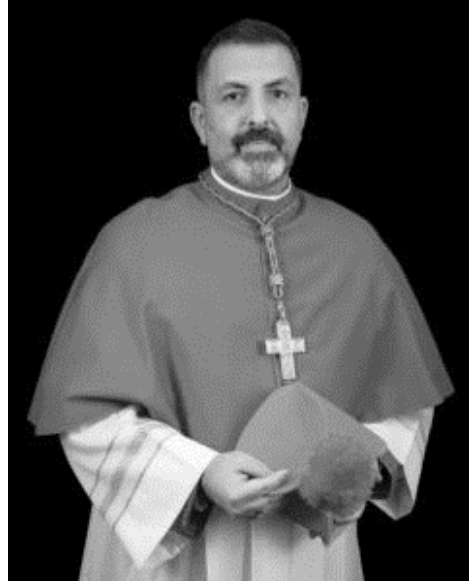
Named Eighth Archbishop of Washington
January 6, 2025

Installed Archbishop of Washington
March 11, 2025

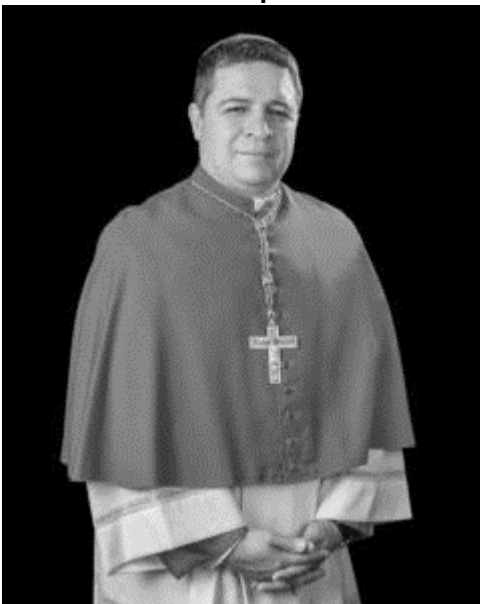
Auxiliary Bishops of Washington



Most Rev. Roy E. Campbell, Jr.
Titular Bishop of Ucres



Most Rev. Juan Esposito-Garcia
Titular Bishop of Tabla



Most Rev. Evelio Menjivar-Ayala
Titular Bishop of Aeto

Former Archbishops of Washington



Most Rev. Michael J. Curley
1939-1947



Patrick Cardinal O'Boyle
1948 -1973



William Cardinal Baum
1973-1980



James Cardinal Hickey
1980-2000



Theodore E. McCarrick
2001-2006



Donald Cardinal Wuerl
2006-2019



Wilton Cardinal Gregory
2019-2025