

Pope Francis appoints Michael William Fisher 15th bishop of Diocese of Buffalo

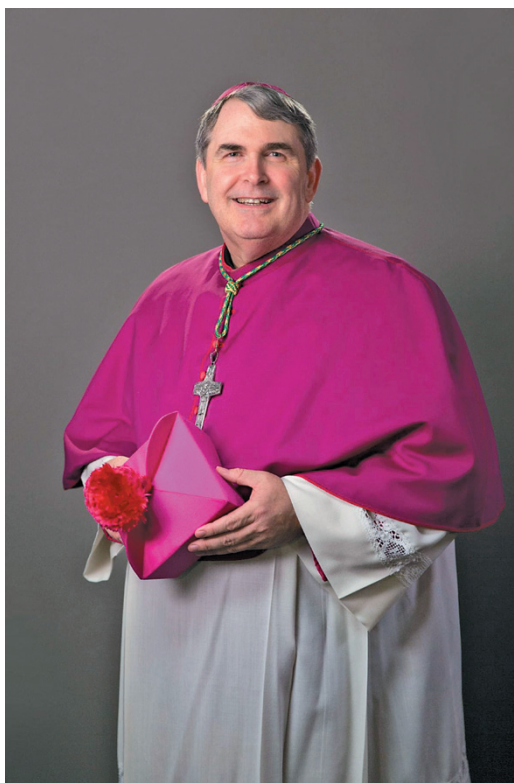
Washington, D.C., Auxiliary Bishop Michael William Fisher has been appointed by His Holiness Pope Francis as the 15th bishop of the Diocese of Buffalo in an announcement from the Vatican today at noon Rome time.

"Today the Archdiocese of Washington is privileged to share a generous gift with the Diocese of Buffalo with Pope Francis' appointment of Michael William Fisher to become the 15th shepherd of that local church," said Cardinal Wilton Gregory, archbishop of Washington, D.C. "Bishop Fisher is an exceptionally compassionate and skilled servant of the church. His distinguished history as pastor, vicar for priests, and member of our pastoral administration have prepared him well for his new responsibilities in that diocese. While we will miss his deft pastoral talents, they will be warmly welcomed by the faithful, religious, and clergy of the Diocese of Buffalo. May the Lord bring joy to his heart and to the hearts of the people who will welcome him."

Bishop Fisher stated, "I am deeply humbled and grateful to the holy father for this gift to serve the people of Buffalo as their bishop. I am eager to become part of this vibrant faith community, with a proud and distinguished legacy of Catholic education, ministry and civic service.

I offer my abiding gratitude and admiration to Bishop Edward Scharfenberger for the generosity of his spirit and his selfless devotion to serving as apostolic administrator during this interim period and while also leading the Diocese of Albany. Though the challenges that currently confront the Diocese of Buffalo are many and significant, they are not equal to the resolve of so many committed lay women and men, devoted priests, deacons and religious across Western New York, who are no less determined to reveal God's transformative love that has the power to bind every wound, renew and make us whole. We would do well to recall the promise in Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians: 'No eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him.'

Scharfenberger said, "This is a blessed and wonderful day for the good people across Western New York. In Bishop Michael Fisher,



The Rev. Michael William Fisher, newly appointed bishop of the Diocese of Buffalo.

they have been given a priest, pastor and bishop whose passion to serve, to listen, to heal and comfort have distinguished his 30-year ministry. It has been among my life's great joys to get to know and assist this faith-filled community, to accompany them in their initial steps on the path toward renewal and redefine the enormous potential of the church to accomplish so much good across this region. I pledge my fraternal support to Bishop Fisher and my abiding love and care for the family of faith of this diocese now and in all the days ahead."

Fisher, 62, a native of Baltimore and the oldest of five children born to Margo and William ("Bill") Fisher (now deceased), was ordained to the priesthood by Cardinal James A. Hickey on June 23, 1990. He was assigned to

Sacred Heart parish in La Plata, Maryland, and in 1995 as a pastor of Holy Family parish in Hillcrest Heights. Four years later, he became pastor of St. John Neumann parish in Gaithersburg.

"At my core I am a parish priest and pastor," Fisher said. "All I ever wanted to be when finally discerning and accepting the call to ministry was to serve a parish family, to walk with its members and accompany them on their own journey toward holiness; to share in their joys, their heartaches and to have some part to play in revealing the incomparable love and grace of God as they experience life's defining moments."

In 2005, then-Father Fisher was named a chaplain to His Holiness John Paul II (a distinction that entails the title of "monsignor"), and was appointed that same year as vicar general for the apostolates, which entailed overseeing archdiocesan ministries for education, ethnic ministries, social justice and service, parish life and youth ministry. The following year, then-Monsignor Fisher was appointed vicar for clergy and secretary for ministerial leadership, with responsibility for vocations, formation and care of the clergy for the archdiocese. Upon the appointment of Archbishop Gregory (now Cardinal Gregory) in 2019, Fisher maintained his responsibilities as secretary for ministerial leadership.

Named an auxiliary bishop for the Archdiocese of Washington by Pope Francis on June 8, 2018, Fisher was ordained to the episcopate on June 29, 2018, at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

Throughout his 30 years of priestly ministry, Fisher has served on various boards and committees of the Archdiocese

of Washington, including, the college of consultors, priest council, administrative board, priest retirement board, clergy personnel board, deacon review board, deacon council, needy parish committee, as well as the forward in faith committee. He also serves as an ecclesiastical counselor to the Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice Foundation.

Much of Fisher's ministry has involved the continuing education of priests, particularly in aiding new pastors in their roles and the planning and implementation of ongoing clergy training via convocations and retreats.

Fisher was born March 3, 1958, in Baltimore. As a youth, he played Little League baseball, and wrestled, and was active in the Boy Scouts and eventually attained the rank of Eagle Scout. Fisher recalls always working, starting as an 8-year-old paperboy for The Baltimore Sun. Fisher attended the Baltimore Polytechnic Institute high school, and received a Bachelor of Science in business administration and accounting at the University of Maryland in 1984.

With his business and accounting degree, Fisher worked as a comptroller for a psychiatric practice in Bethesda. Discerning a vocation to the priesthood, he entered seminary at Mount Saint Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland, in 1986.

Fisher's installation will take place at 2 p.m. Friday, Jan. 15, 2021, in the Cathedral of Saint Joseph in Buffalo. His Eminence Cardinal Timothy Dolan, metropolitan archbishop of New York, will preside and Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States, will be in attendance.

For further information, visit www.buffalodiocese.org.



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Youngstown Lions announce annual holiday lighting contest

The Youngstown Lions Club's annual holiday lighting contest will take place on Monday evening, Dec. 14. Youngstown Lions Club members will judge home decorations from the areas of Lower River Road to Porter Center Road, from Lake Road to the Porter town line, and in the Village of Youngstown.

Residents are invited to participate.

Three prizes are being offered. The first-place winner will receive a \$100 gift card, with the second-place winner netting a \$75 gift card, and the third-place winner a \$50 gift card.

All decisions of the judges will be final.

"Entries will be based on originality, creativity and being in the Christmas/holiday spirit," Youngstown Lion Ernie Lavigueur said. He noted homes that won over the past three years are not eligible for this year's contest. "Youngstown Lions extend their best wishes for a safe holiday to all area residents and good luck to the home decorators," Lavigueur said.