



ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI

Office of Communication & Mission Promotion

PRESS RELEASE

Jennifer Schack

Director of Media Relations
Archdiocese of Cincinnati
Office | 513.263.6618
Cell | 859.512.5626
jschack@CatholicCincinnati.org

Release Date: March 22, 2020

Archbishop Daniel Pilarczyk dead at age 85

Most Reverend Daniel E. Pilarczyk, Archbishop Emeritus of Cincinnati and a nationally prominent churchman, educator and author of popular books about Catholic themes, died today at 9:50 a.m. at the age of 85.

"Among his brother bishops, Archbishop Pilarczyk was recognized as one of the outstanding churchmen of his time," said his successor, the Most Reverend Dennis M. Schnurr, Archbishop of Cincinnati. "They elected him not only president of what was then the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, but also chair of every significant committee of the bishops' conference.

"His accomplishments on the local level in his tenure as Archbishop of Cincinnati were equally outstanding. He unselfishly devoted his entire priesthood to this archdiocese, including 27 years as its archbishop. I have known and admired Archbishop Pilarczyk for more than 30 years. I shall miss his friendship, his graciousness, and his wise counsel."

Archbishop Pilarczyk was born in Dayton, Ohio, on August 12, 1934. After studies at the Pontifical Urban University in Rome, he was ordained a priest on Dec. 20, 1959. His ordination as bishop in 1974 and installation as archbishop in 1982 also were on Dec. 20. His resignation as Archbishop of Cincinnati was accepted by Pope Benedict XVI on Dec. 21, 2009, the day after the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. At the time he was the country's longest-tenured archbishop and the longest serving active bishop. In retirement he continued to serve generously in administering the sacraments.

The archbishop's distinguished service to the American church included terms as vice president (1986-1989) and president (1989-1992) of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. He also chaired many committees of the conference, including those on education, liturgy, and doctrine.

"A theologian and classicist viewed by many as the U.S. hierarchy's smartest bulb, there's seemingly not a national post Pilarczyk hasn't held," commentator Rocco Palmo wrote on his Catholic blog "Whispers in the Loggia" in December 2007. "Atop the list: board-chair of the Catholic University of America, chair of ICEL (International Committee on English in the Liturgy), chair of the bishops' committees on Doctrine,

RADIATE CHRIST

Liturgy and Priorities and Plans – and and, of course, vice-president and president of the episcopal conference.” Palmo later (September 2008) wrote that he was “regarded by many of his confreres as the leading intellect among the U.S. bishops.”

Archbishop Pilarczyk wrote more than a dozen popular books and many pamphlets and articles. His best-selling book was *Twelve Tough Issues: What the Church Teaches – and Why*, subsequently revised as *Twelve Tough Issues – And More*. His most recent were *When God Speaks* and *Live Letters*. As he approached the end of his ministry as archbishop, he launched the “Grateful Believers” initiative to heighten awareness of God’s blessings and the proper response in stewardship. He wrote a score of articles for *The Catholic Telegraph* and invited dozens of others to share their own stories as grateful believers. In retirement, he wrote and recorded a daily 90-second homily on the Gospel reading of the day, “Sharing the Word,” which was heard on the Internet and broadcast over more than 100 radio stations. In 2011, he was honored by the Salesian Guild as Catholic Communicator of the Year.

Other major achievements of Archbishop Pilarczyk include:

- At a time when many dioceses chose or were forced to close seminaries, Archbishop Pilarczyk presided over a seminary that improved academically and physically. In addition to training future priests in its Mount St. Mary’s division, the Athenaeum of Ohio is also a training center for lay ministry. Its Lay Pastoral Ministry Program was one of the first in the country (1975).
- Archbishop Pilarczyk ordained more than 100 priests and three bishops. He conferred confirmation on more than 74,000 people.
- In a proactive response to the declining number of priests available, Archbishop Pilarczyk created the “Futures Project.” In addition to developing new strategies to increase vocations, the project also created 100 pastoral regions that will provide a structure for the archdiocese to operate the current parishes with as few as 100 pastors.
- He was a strong supporter of Catholic radio in the archdiocese, making a substantial contribution from the Archdiocese toward the purchase of Sacred Heart Catholic Radio 740 AM and frequently appearing on the air. The station began with a broadcast blessing from Archbishop Pilarczyk on Jan. 1, 2001. He also encouraged Radio Maria.
- While demographics led to the closing and merging of schools and parishes in the Archdiocese, as throughout the country, Archbishop Pilarczyk had the joy of dedicating 37 new churches or chapels and rededicating 25 in his years as archbishop. Although only 44th in size among dioceses around the country, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati has the sixth largest network of Catholic schools.

In addition to a doctorate in sacred theology from Pontifical Urban University (1961), Archbishop Pilarczyk held an M.A. in classics from Xavier University in Cincinnati (1965) and a Ph.D. in classics from the University of Cincinnati (1969). Every major college and university in Cincinnati awarded him an honorary doctorate, including Hebrew Union College / Jewish Institute of Religion (1997). The University of Cincinnati's College of Arts and Science also named him a Distinguished Alumnus of the Year in 2001.

He had a strong interest in education. From 1963 to 1974 he was on the faculty of the former St. Gregory Seminary in Cincinnati, the last six years as Rector. While auxiliary bishop of Cincinnati from 1974 to 1982, he was Director of Educational Services for the Archdiocese

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Cincinnati is the 44th largest Catholic diocese in the country, with more than 450,000 Catholics, and has the fifth largest Catholic school system in terms of enrollment with more than 40,000 students. The 19-county territory includes 211 parishes and 111 Catholic primary and secondary schools.

RADIATE CHRIST

Pastoral Center



100 East Eighth Street



Cincinnati, Ohio 45202



www.CatholicAOC.org