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**POPE FRANCIS ACCEPTS THE RETIREMENT OF  
MOST REVEREND MICHAEL J. FITZGERALD,  
AUXILIARY BISHOP OF PHILADELPHIA**

*Bishop Fitzgerald has served as an Auxiliary Bishop of Philadelphia since 2010 and as a priest of the Archdiocese for 43 years.*

At noon Roman time today, Pope Francis announced from the Vatican that he has accepted the retirement of Most Reverend Michael J. Fitzgerald, Auxiliary Bishop of Philadelphia.

As required by the Code of Canon Law for all bishops, Bishop Fitzgerald petitioned the Vatican for retirement in anticipation of his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday, which he marked earlier this month.

Although officially retired, Bishop Fitzgerald will continue serving the Church of Philadelphia in a pastoral capacity.

**Statement of Most Reverend Nelson J. Pérez on the Occasion of the Retirement of Most Reverend Michael J. Fitzgerald**

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I invite all of the bishops, priests, deacons, consecrated religious, and lay faithful of the Church in Philadelphia to join me in expressing prayerful congratulations to Bishop Fitzgerald on the occasion of his retirement. We rejoice in thanksgiving for the gift of his ministry as a priest and bishop. It has spanned more than four decades and impacted countless lives in deeply positive ways.

Throughout the years, Bishop Fitzgerald generously sowed seeds of deep love for the Lord with the zealous heart of a missionary disciple. With great faith, fidelity, charity, and humility Bishop Fitzgerald has worked tirelessly for the good of souls and to build up the Kingdom of God in our region. It has been a great joy for me to work with him closely for many years and I am grateful for the wise counsel he has provided during my time as Archbishop.

On behalf of our entire local Church, I extend best wishes to Bishop Fitzgerald as he enters into a new season of ministry and pray that his retirement will be filled with peace, joy, and happiness.

*Most Reverend Nelson J. Pérez, D.D.*  
*Archbishop of Philadelphia*

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### **Biographical Information on Most Reverend Michael J. Fitzgerald**

Michael Joseph Fitzgerald, one of nine children, was born to the late Edwin Michael Fitzgerald and Dorothy (Bogart) Fitzgerald in Montclair, New Jersey on May 23, 1948. His family moved to Southwest Philadelphia and then to King of Prussia. He attended Saint Clement Parish School in Philadelphia, Saint Augustine Parish School in Bridgeport, and Bishop Kenrick High School in Norristown.

He received a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Temple University in 1970 and a Juris Doctorate from Villanova University School of Law in 1973. He earned a Master of Divinity Degree from Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary in 1980 and was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia by John Cardinal Krol in May 1980.

Following ordination, Father Fitzgerald served as parochial vicar at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Philadelphia, (1980-1981) and as parochial vicar at Saint Callistus Parish, Philadelphia, (1981-1982). After service at the parish level, he was appointed to the Metropolitan Tribunal. There he held the posts of Defender of the Bond (1982-1983) and Prosynodal Judge (1983-1987). Father Fitzgerald received his *Juris Canonis Licentiae* from the Catholic University of America in 1989 and his *Juris Canonis Doctoris* from Gregorian University in Rome in 1991. He was the founding Director of the Office for Legal Services for the Archdiocese, now the Office of General Counsel (1991-2004).

In 2003, Saint Pope John Paul II named Father Fitzgerald a Chaplain to His Holiness with the title of Monsignor. Monsignor Fitzgerald served as Vice Rector of Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary (2004-2007) and Judicial Vicar for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia (2007-2010).

In 2010, Pope Benedict XVI appointed him Auxiliary Bishop of Philadelphia and Titular Bishop of Tamalula. Bishop Fitzgerald was ordained to the episcopacy on August 6, 2010 by Cardinal Justin Rigali. Since that time, he has assisted Cardinal Rigali, Archbishop Chaput, and Archbishop Pérez with the pastoral and administrative care of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Over the past decade Bishop Fitzgerald has taken key leadership roles involving Catholic Education and Archdiocesan efforts to promote and maintain safe and environments for children and youth. In addition, he has been the primary liaison to communities of consecrated religious as well as Catholic colleges and universities throughout the five-county region.