



NEWS RELEASE

DIOCESE OF ERIE

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Bishop Persico Invites Diocese of Erie to Pray for the Appointment of New Bishop

As he celebrated his 75th birthday in November, Bishop Lawrence T. Persico invited the faithful of the Diocese of Erie to join him in praying for the next bishop who will shepherd the 13 counties of northwestern Pennsylvania. In accordance with canon law, Bishop Persico has submitted his letter of resignation to the Holy Father and will continue to serve until Pope Leo XIV appoints his successor.

To prayerfully guide the diocese through this period of transition, Bishop Persico introduced a [Prayer for a New Bishop](#), which began being offered at Mass after the Communion Rite on the First Sunday of Advent and will continue each Sunday throughout Advent and in the months that follow. The faithful are also asked to include [the prayer](#) during meetings and gatherings throughout the coming months.

“Turning 75 gives every bishop an [opportunity for deep reflection](#),” Bishop Persico said. “I am grateful for the privilege of serving the people of this diocese for the past 13 years. As we enter this time of transition, I ask the faithful to join me in praying for the one whom the Holy Father will send. May the Holy Spirit guide Pope Leo in choosing a shepherd who will lead with wisdom, compassion and a true heart for Christ.”

After submitting his letter to the Holy Father, a bishop continues serving fully and faithfully until the Pope names a successor. For months – sometimes longer – the life of the diocese continues without change: ministries continue, Confirmations are celebrated, the bishop keeps working with diocesan leadership just as he always has.

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Simultaneously, an episcopal transition planning process begins, both locally and in Rome. This thoughtful and intentional work is done to prepare the diocese to welcome a new bishop.

In the home diocese, preparation for an ordination or installation of the current bishop's successor begins. Locally and beyond, the selection process for a suitable bishop goes through a series of consultations bound by strict confidentiality. The apostolic nuncio – [His Eminence Cardinal Christophe Pierre](#) – oversees the final list of names forwarded to Rome and plays a decisive role in the selection process. Before submitting the list, he gathers facts and information about potential candidates including an assessment of what is needed for the diocese and the suitability of the candidate to fulfill those needs.

Once the apostolic nuncio's report is submitted, the Vatican starts its careful, prayerful process of discerning the next shepherd for the diocese. It's thoughtful, deliberate and entirely behind the scenes. While the faithful wait, the church continues to operate under its current bishop's stable hand.

As the Diocese of Erie prepares for the episcopal transition, we pause to honor Bishop Persico's legacy.

His 13-year episcopate has been marked by his commitment to healing, transparency and pastoral leadership. Bishop Persico became a national voice during the 2018 statewide grand jury report, urging honesty and accountability as essential to rebuilding trust in the church. He strengthened safeguards for children and youth, oversaw long-term planning for parishes and schools and encouraged Eucharistic renewal and missionary discipleship across the diocese.

Reaching his 75th birthday, Bishop Persico paused with [Faith magazine](#) to look back on the journey of his episcopacy. He spoke candidly about the joys and trials of leadership, and the enduring grace of God at work in his ministry. The article stands as a testament to a life of faithful service, spiritual guidance and a legacy that continues to shape the Diocese of Erie and inspire those who follow.

Bishop Persico's steady presence and dedication will remain a source of gratitude as the diocese prepares for its next chapter.

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Download the Prayer for a New Bishop.

Read *Reflections at 75*.

The Episcopal Transition – At a Glance

What happens after a bishop submits his resignation at 75?

- **He keeps leading.**
The bishop continues all ministry and governance until a successor is named.
- **The Pope reviews the resignation.**
Acceptance may happen quietly and without immediate effect.
- **Behind the scenes: the search begins.**
The papal nuncio gathers input and prepares recommendations.
- **The Vatican discerns candidates.**
A confidential, prayer-centered process.
- **Announcement day!**
Rome names the next bishop.
- **A joyful installation.**
The new shepherd arrives, and the transition is complete.

THE EPISCOPAL TRANSITION

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The apostolic nuncio gathers input and prepares recommendations.
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A confidential, prayer-centered process.
-  **5 Announcement day!**
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-  **6 A joyful installation.**
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"Even in times of transition, the Holy Spirit guides the church with calm and purpose."



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