

Pope names Archbishop Smith of Edmonton next Archbishop of Vancouver, accepts Archbishop Miller's retirement

By The B.C. Catholic

Edmonton Archbishop Richard W. Smith has been appointed by Pope Francis as the next Archbishop of Vancouver, succeeding Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB, whose retirement has been accepted by the Holy Father.

Archbishop Smith, 65, has led the Archdiocese of Edmonton since 2007 and has served in dioceses across Canada.

Archbishop Miller reached the age of 75 in 2021 and submitted his resignation to the Pope, as required by canon law. However, he was asked to remain in office until a successor was named. The Vatican announced this morning that Archbishop Smith will be the next shepherd of the Archdiocese of Vancouver, with Archbishop Miller continuing as Apostolic Administrator until the new Archbishop is installed as the 12th Archbishop of Vancouver, likely in May.

In a statement, Archbishop Smith said, "I am grateful to His Holiness for the confidence placed in me to assume this new mission, and ask for the assistance of your prayers."

Archbishop Miller welcomed the appointment with "gratitude to the Holy Father and great satisfaction," assuring Archbishop Smith of his prayers and fraternal support.

"Vancouver has been given a shepherd of extraordinary gifts and vast experience. We warmly welcome Archbishop Smith, who is already familiar with the challenges facing us here—evangelization, passing on the faith to young people, Indigenous reconciliation, vocations to the priesthood, to name just a few."

Despite the Archdiocese waiting nearly four years for the announcement, Archbishop Miller said, "it has proved well worth the wait." He expressed appreciation for the Pope's discernment in making the appointment over an extended period and for allowing it to be announced even as he deals with serious illness.

As Pope Francis continues to receive treatment at Rome's Gemelli Hospital, Archbishop Miller called for continued prayers. "We have been very close to the Holy Father in recent days, praying fervently for him throughout the Archdiocese. The appointment of a new Archbishop brings the Pope and his ministry as Successor of Peter even nearer to our hearts and minds," he said.



Edmonton Archbishop Richard Smith celebrates Mass with Pope Francis at Commonwealth Stadium in Edmonton in July 2022. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

He noted that after moving to Vancouver, Archbishop Smith will have served “*A Mari Usque Ad Mare*” (From Sea to Sea), Canada’s official motto.

Archbishop Smith has served as Archbishop of Edmonton for 17 years and has been a priest for nearly 38 years.

Born in Halifax, he was ordained to the priesthood on May 23, 1987, for the Archdiocese of Halifax. He later pursued further studies in theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, earning a licentiate in 1993 and a doctorate in 1998. In Halifax, he served as chaplain to the deaf community from 1986 to 1991, held the office of vicar general, and was responsible for pastoral ministry to French-speaking Catholics.

He was a professor of theology at St. Peter’s Seminary in London, Ont., before being appointed Bishop of Pembroke, Ont., in 2002.

In 2007, he was named Archbishop of Edmonton. During his time there, Archbishop Smith took on several national leadership roles, including President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, spiritual adviser to the Catholic Women’s League of Canada, and board member of the

Canadian Catholic Bioethics Institute. He is currently a member of the Canadian Catholic Indigenous Council and the Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA).

In 2022, he was the general coordinator for Pope Francis' pilgrimage of healing and reconciliation with Canada's Indigenous peoples.

Archbishop Miller became Archbishop of Vancouver in January 2009, succeeding the late Archbishop Raymond Roussin, SM, after serving as Coadjutor Archbishop since 2007. Before his appointment to Vancouver, he was Secretary at the Congregation for Catholic Education in Rome.

LIVE: Archbishop Richard Smith Announcement

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=54r255sSukw>