



Office of Cardinal Rigali



Cardinal Justin Rigali was born in Los Angeles, California on April 19, 1935, the son of Henry Alphonsus Rigali and Frances Irene White and the last of seven children.

His siblings, Sister Charlotte Rigali, CSJ, Henry Anthony Rigali, Philip Rigali, Paul J. Rigali, Clare Rigali and Father Norbert J. Rigali, SJ are all now deceased.

He was baptized in Holy Cross Parish and attended Holy Cross and Transfiguration Grammar Schools in Los Angeles.

The archdiocesan seminaries in which he studied are Los Angeles College (Los Angeles), Our Lady Queen of Angels Seminary (San Fernando) and St. John's Seminary (Camarillo).

He was ordained a priest by Cardinal James Francis McIntyre on April 25, 1961 in the Cathedral of Saint Vibiana in Los Angeles.

Immediately after ordination to the priesthood, he was temporarily assigned as associate pastor at Ascension Parish (Los Angeles) and then at St. Raymond's Parish (Downey). In October 1961 he began graduate studies in Canon Law at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome.

During the first two sessions of the Second Vatican Council, he was one of the priest assistants in Saint Peter's Basilica.

In June 1964 he attained the Doctorate in Canon Law from the Pontifical Gregorian University.

During the summer of 1964 he served as associate pastor at Saint Madeleine's Parish in Pomona (Archdiocese of Los Angeles). From 1964 to 1966 he followed the course of studies at the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy in preparation for service to the Holy See. On Nov. 25, 1964, he entered the English-language department of the Secretariat of State.

From September 1966 to February 1970 he served at the Apostolic Nunciature in Madagascar, which was also the Apostolic Delegation for the Islands of the Indian Ocean, La Réunion, and Mauritius.

He was named a Papal Chamberlain on July 11, 1967.

He returned to Rome on Feb. 11, 1970, and was appointed Director of the English-language Section of the Secretariat of State. At the same time he became the English-language translator for Pope Paul VI, whom he accompanied on his international journey to Iran, Dhaka (then East Pakistan), the Philippines, Australia, Samoa, American Samoa, Indonesia, Hong Kong, and Sri Lanka (then Ceylon).

During the years 1970–1985 he lived at the Villa Stritch (the residence set up by the American bishops for U.S. diocesan priests working in the Roman Curia), and for a number of those years he was Chaplain to the Cloistered Carmelite Nuns at the Monastery of St. Joseph in Rome.

During the years 1972–1973 he was a Professor at the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy.

Between the years 1979–1987 he accompanied Pope John Paul II on a number of his international journeys, including his two major journeys to the United States (1979, 1987).

He was made a Prelate of Honor of His Holiness on April 19, 1980.

He became a magistral chaplain in the Order of the Knights of Malta on Oct. 25, 1984 and on May 23, 2008 he received the Order's Bailiff Grand Cross of Honor and Devotion.

On June 8, 1985, he was appointed Titular Archbishop of Bolsena and President of the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy.

On September 14, 1985, he was ordained a bishop by Pope John Paul II in the Cathedral of Albano.

On October 13, 1986, he became a member of the Order of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre.

From 1985 to 1990, in addition to being President of the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy, he held a number of positions at the Vatican, serving the Secretariat of State, the Council for Public Affairs of the Church, the Congregation for Bishops and the Pontifical Council for the Laity. On December 21, 1989, he was named Secretary of the Congregation for Bishops, and on January 2, 1990, he became the Secretary of the College of Cardinals. He was likewise a member of the Permanent Interdicasterial Commission of the Holy See and served as a consultant to the Pontifical Commission for Latin America and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

In addition to his work in the offices of the Roman Curia, Archbishop Rigali was engaged in other pastoral activities, assisting a number of parishes and seminaries of Rome.

On January 25, 1994, Archbishop Rigali was appointed eighth Bishop/seventh Archbishop of St. Louis by Pope John Paul II.

Archbishop Rigali was installed as Archbishop of St. Louis on March 15, 1994, by His Eminence Cardinal Bernardin Gantin, Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, in the presence of Archbishop Agostino Cacciavillan, Apostolic Pro-Nuncio to the United States.

On June 29, 1994, Archbishop Rigali received the pallium as Archbishop of St. Louis.

On November 7, 1994, he became a member of the Knights of Columbus. Currently he serves as Chaplain for Council 5207 at the Cathedral of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus in Knoxville, TN.

He is the Chairman of the Iconography Committee of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception and a member of the Board of Trustees of the Shrine.

He is Episcopal Liaison for the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious.

On June 12, 1995, Archbishop Rigali was appointed by Pope John Paul II to the Preparatory Council of the Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for America.

He was later elected as a delegate of the U.S. Bishops to the Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for America, with the theme: "Encounter with the Living Jesus Christ: the Way to Conversion, Communion and Solidarity in America." (November–December 1997)

On January 26–27, 1999, he hosted the Pastoral Visit of Pope John Paul II to St. Louis.

Pope John Paul II, in April 1999, appointed him a member of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, a membership which he held for many years.

In 2001 he was appointed by Pope John Paul II as a member of the 10th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, with theme: "The Bishop: Servant of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the Hope of the World."

Cardinal Rigali formerly chaired the Committee for Pro-Life Activities of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and served the Conference in other areas as well such as the Subcommittee on Aid to the Catholic Church in Central and Eastern Europe, the Committee on Divine Worship and the Subcommittee on the Translation of Scripture Texts.

He also served as a member of the Papal Foundation.

On July 15, 2003, he was appointed the 12th bishop/eighth Archbishop of Philadelphia; his Installation took place on Oct. 7, 2003.

Archbishop Rigali was appointed to the College of Cardinals by His Holiness Pope John Paul II on Sept. 28, 2003 and was formally created Cardinal in the Public Consistory of October 21, 2003.

On June 5, 2004 he became a member of the Knights of Peter Claver.

As Metropolitan Archbishop of Philadelphia, Cardinal Rigali received the pallium from the Holy Father on June 29, 2004.

In October 2005 the Cardinal served as a member of the 11th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, with the theme: "The Eucharist: Source and Summit of the Life and Mission of the Church."

Pope Benedict XVI appointed Cardinal Rigali a member of the Vatican Congregation for Bishops on September 26, 2007. Through 2013, he served on the Congregation's Vox Clara Committee.

Cardinal Rigali served as Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Scranton from August 31, 2009, until the episcopal ordination of Bishop Joseph Bambera on April 26, 2010.

In June 2011 Cardinal Rigali represented Pope Benedict XVI as his Special Envoy at the celebration in the Czech Republic of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Saint John Neumann.

On July 19, 2011, Cardinal Rigali became Archbishop Emeritus of Philadelphia upon Pope Benedict XVI's acceptance of his letter of resignation written the year prior when he reached the age of 75. Until September 8, 2014, when his successor was installed as Archbishop of Philadelphia, the Cardinal served as Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese.

Pope Francis appointed Cardinal Rigali as his Special Envoy for the celebration in the Cathedral Basilica of Saint Louis on August 24, 2014, marking the 250th anniversary of the founding of the City of St. Louis.

On August 22, 2015 the title of Knight Commander was conferred on Cardinal Rigali by the Order of the Fleur de Lis.

Cardinal Rigali now resides in Tennessee in the residence of the Bishop of Knoxville.

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Contact Cardinal Rigali

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