



Supported by the Annual Appeal

Archbishop Elden Francis Curtiss 1993-2009

The Most Reverend Elden Francis Curtiss is the fourth archbishop and ninth to lead the Archdiocese of Omaha. He came to Omaha after serving 17 years in the Diocese of Helena, Montana where he was ordained a bishop on April 28, 1976. He was named Archbishop of Omaha on May 4, 1993, and installed on June 16, 1993. His 16-year tenure here was marked by tremendous growth.

Personal History

Archbishop Curtiss, born June 16, 1932, is the eldest son of Elden F. and Mary A. Neiger Curtiss, now deceased. He has three brothers. He completed studies at St. Edward Seminary College and St. Edward Seminary Theologate in Kenmore, Washington. He was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Baker in Eastern Oregon on May 24, 1958, by Bishop Francis P. Leipzig. As a priest, he served as parochial vicar and pastor in parishes in Lakeview, LaGrande and Jordan Valley, Oregon, as well as hospital chaplain.

Archbishop Curtiss took advanced studies at Fordham University in New York City, the University of Portland and the University of Notre Dame. He holds a Master of Divinity degree and a Master of Arts degree in education administration.

In the years leading to his ordination as a bishop in Helena, he served as director of information and superintendent of schools in the Diocese of Baker, and later president-rector of Mount Angel Seminary in western Oregon.

In his role as archbishop emeritus, he will continue to serve in the following roles: member of the Pontifical Council for the Family (Rome), Episcopal Moderator of the Pro-Sanctity in the United States and consultant of USCCB Committee on Marriage and Family Life.

He looks forward to an active retirement within the Archdiocese of Omaha and the universal church abroad. He will be of support to Archbishop-Designate George J. Lucas. He plans a continued pastoral role in the archdiocese officiating at confirmations and serving as a spiritual director. He will also give greater attention to his research and plans to write about the challenging relationship between faith and today's contemporary culture.

A Time of Growth & Financial Stability

Under Archbishop Curtiss, Catholic education flourished, vocations to religious life continued steady growth and parish members nearly doubled their average weekly contributions. While new schools opened, great progress was made in efforts to sustain Omaha's inner-city schools.

(more)

Built Parishes, Churches & Schools

- Parishes: St. Charles Borromeo, Omaha; St. Matthew, Bellevue; St. Andrew Kim Taegon, Omaha; Churches: St James, Omaha; St. Vincent de Paul, Omaha; St. Patrick, Fremont; St. Patrick, Gretna; Holy Family Shrine, Gretna.
- Schools: St. Patrick Elementary School, Omaha; Archbishop Bergan Elementary School, Fremont; St. Vincent de Paul, Omaha; Jesuit Middle School, Omaha; Skutt Catholic High School, Omaha.
- A unique model of Catholic education was established in 2007 with the opening of St. Peter Claver Cristo Rey Catholic High School. Today some 101 students receive both an education and valuable career experience.

Established Programs

- A Review Board implemented new policies and procedures for the protection of children and young people. The Safe Environment coordinator now oversees diocesan-wide training programs developed in consultation with Boys Town USA.
- New ministries established to support Hispanic, Sudanese, Korean, Native American and African-American communities.
- Elden F. Curtiss Youth Camp & Retreat Center

Created Strategic Initiatives

- Provided the support and leadership necessary to create the Children's Scholarship Fund of Omaha. The fund helps families with limited income choose parochial or private education. Today, it is one of the most successful chapters in the country, awarding more than \$13 million since its inception in 1998. The formation of the CORE school board followed to support inner-city Catholic schools.
- Called for a year of study, reflection, discussion, prayer and renewed liturgical worship devoted to the Holy Eucharist. The culmination of this privileged time was a Eucharistic Congress on April 27, 2003, held at the Civic Auditorium. Convened the Fifth Synod of the Archdiocese of Omaha on July 11-13, 2004, "Called from Worship into Service."
- Convened a first-ever Catholic Schools Symposium at the Qwest Center on October 2, 2008.
- Started the Annual Appeal, which funds outreach to the needy, child and adult education and support for priests.

Founded Organizations

- St. Cecilia Institute for Laity Formation
- Archbishop Curtiss overcame the nationwide decrease in vocations, ordaining 63 priests during his tenure. With his support, the Institute for Priestly Formation was established in 1995. It became a public association of the faithful of the archdiocese in March 2008.