

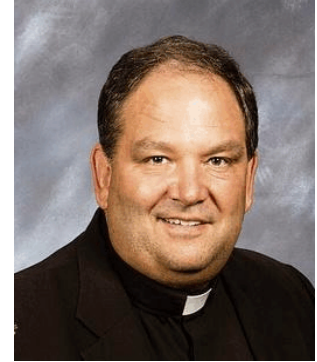


## **DIocese of GAYLORD**

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### **Pope Benedict XVI Names New Bishop for Diocese of Gaylord**

GAYLORD, Michigan: The Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, has named the Reverend Monsignor Bernard A. Hebda, Undersecretary of the Pontifical Council for the Interpretation of Legislative Texts at the Vatican, as the new Bishop for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Gaylord. Bishop-elect Hebda, 50, of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, will become the fourth bishop of Gaylord succeeding Bishop Patrick R. Cooney who has led the diocese for the past 20 years. The announcement was made today by Archbishop Pietro Sambi, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, in Washington, D.C.

As required by Church law, Bishop Cooney submitted his resignation to the Holy Father when he turned 75 on March 10 of this year. Bishop Cooney will remain in the diocese as Apostolic Administrator until the date of Bishop-elect Hebda's episcopal ordination and installation, which has not yet been determined.

The son of Bernard and Helen Clark Hebda, Bishop-elect Hebda was born on September 3, 1959 in Pittsburgh, PA, and is the brother of Yvonne Hebda, Patrick (Bernice) Hebda and Terrence (Rene) Hebda. His parents and siblings currently reside in Sarasota, Florida.

Bishop-elect Hebda attended Resurrection Elementary School in Brookline, PA, and then graduated from South Hills Catholic High School in Pittsburgh in 1977. He continued his education at Harvard University in Cambridge, MA, receiving a master of arts in 1980 followed by a juris doctor degree from the Columbia University School of Law in 1983. He was admitted to the Bar of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1983 and worked as an associate in the law firm of Reed, Smith, Shaw and McClay.

In 1984, Bishop-elect Hebda enrolled at St. Paul Seminary in Pittsburgh and pursued the required studies in philosophy at Duquesne University before being sent to North American College in Rome in 1985 where he completed his theological studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University.

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Bishop-elect Hebda was ordained a deacon on April 6, 1989 at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome by Archbishop John Quinn, and was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Donald W. Wuerl on July 1, 1989 in St. Paul Cathedral in Pittsburgh. After his ordination, he briefly served as Parochial Vicar Pro Tem at Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Elwood City, PA, before returning to Rome to complete his licentiate in canon law which he received in 1990 from the Pontifical Gregorian University.

After returning to Pittsburgh, Bishop-elect Hebda served in the bishop's office as Master of Ceremonies from 1990-1992, in team ministry at Prince of Peace Parish on Pittsburgh's South Side from 1992-1995, and as director of campus ministry at the Slippery Rock University Newman Center from 1995-1996. He also served on the Canonical Advisory Council, the Priest Council and the Priest Personnel Board.

In 1996, Bishop-elect Hebda was appointed to work in the Pontifical Council for the Interpretation of Legislative Texts in Rome which is responsible for the interpretation of the Church's laws, especially the Code of Canon Law. In 2003, he became the Under-secretary of the Council.

While in Rome Bishop-elect Hebda also served as an adjunct spiritual director at North American College and as a confessor for the postulants of the Missionaries of Charity (founded by Mother Teresa) and for the Sisters of that community working at a home for unwed mothers.

"I am both humbled and honored by our Holy Father's decision to appoint me as Bishop Cooney's successor," said Bishop-elect Hebda. "Never in my wildest dreams have I ever imagined that I would one day be the Bishop of Gaylord. I can remember being fascinated by a display of Bishop Baraga's deerskin chasuble and having the greatest admiration for him when I read about his ministry at Harbor Springs and Cheboygan and on Beaver Island – but never did I have an inkling that the Lord would one day call me to serve His flock in the northern portion of the lower peninsula of Michigan.

"I am so grateful to Bishop Cooney not only for his kindness to me, but most especially for the way that he has been Christ's gentle and guiding presence in this local Church over the past twenty years," Bishop-elect Hebda added. "I am honored to be given the opportunity to continue his good work.

"I look forward to getting to know the people of this Diocese – their needs, their strengths, their history, so that we can together strive to continue to make Christ's presence felt in this portion of His vineyard," Bishop-elect Hebda concluded.

The Diocese of Gaylord was established by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on July 20, 1971. The territory encompasses 11,171 square miles and includes the 21 most northern counties of Michigan's lower peninsula. The region is home to some 510,532 residents of which more than 66,200 are Catholic and is served by 80 parishes, 17 Catholic schools and many closely related institutions.