

# Pope names Arthur Leo Kennedy Auxiliary Bishop of Boston

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By Father Robert M. O'Grady  
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Pope Benedict XVI has named the rector of St. John Seminary, Brighton, Father Arthur L. Kennedy as titular bishop of Timidana (in Mauritania Caesariense — present day Algeria) and auxiliary of the archdiocese of Boston. At his ordination on Sept. 14 at Holy Cross Cathedral he will be the 34<sup>th</sup> auxiliary in the more than two century history of the archdiocese.

The bishop-elect is a native of the Hub where he was born on Jan. 9, 1942 and is one of the five sons of the late Arthur and Helen (O'Rourke) Kennedy. He and his brothers Kevin, Terrence, Christopher and Brian have one sister Maurabeth. He is also the proud uncle of four nieces and four nephews.



*Bishop-Elect Arthur L. Kennedy*

He attended Longfellow Elementary School in Boston's Roslindale section and St. Aidan Grammar School in Brookline before entering the Boston Latin School of which he is an alumnus of the class of 1959. He entered the archdiocesan seminaries and received an undergraduate degree from the college seminary in 1964 and was sent for his theological studies to the Pontifical North American College at Rome where he obtained a licentiate degree in sacred theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in 1967; he had been ordained to the priesthood on Dec. 17, 1966 at St. Peter's Basilica by the then rector of the North American College, Bishop Francis Reh.

On his return to the archdiocese, he was named an assistant at St. Monica Parish, Methuen serving there until being named an associate at St. Joseph Parish in East Boston where he served until 1974. During parish assignments he also attended Boston University from which he was graduated with a doctorate in theology in 1978; in the early 1970s he was also a teaching assistant at BU.

For almost 33 years he served in various positions at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota. In addition to serving as a faculty member at the university he was also on the faculty of its School of Divinity (1990, 1995-2000, and 2006); he was Director of the Master of Arts in Theology program at the archdiocesan seminary in St. Paul between 1993 and 1998.

His westward trek was interrupted a few times when he returned east to serve on the faculty of St. John Seminary College (2000-2001); and to Rome where he taught at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (the Angelicum) in Rome in 2000 and 2007.

Another "eastern intrusion" was his three year term at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops headquarters where he served as executive director of its Secretariat for Ecumenical and

Interreligious Affairs, among his predecessors in that office were two American cardinals: Bernard Law and William Baum.

The bishop-elect had strong ties to the ecumenical and interreligious community; he had served as archdiocesan director of that office in St. Paul and Minneapolis between 1985 and 2000. He was particularly interested in the dialogue and ecumenical efforts between the Roman Catholic Church and other non-Catholic communities, e.g. Anglican and Episcopal, Lutheran and Evangelical.

His resume is replete with details of his assignments but more fascinating is a list of his published works and presentations. He has been an active participant in the Lonergan Institute at Boston College and contributed several presentations on American author Flannery O'Connor; he has made presentations on the role of the university in society, liturgical translations in ecumenical dialogue; and more recently articles on Muslim-Catholic dialogue.

A little over three years ago when he was named rector of St. John Seminary, the bishop-elect recalled some influences on his life and priestly vocation. His first recollection was that of his large clan of relatives on both the Kennedy and O'Rourke side of his family, especially his late parents. Hailing from one of the great seed beds of vocations — Holy Name parish — he recalled several priests who influenced him: the parish's indomitable and famous pastor, the late Msgr. Charles ("Zip") Finn; and the late Msgr. John Philbin and Father Joseph Reilly, both of whom served as assistants to Msgr. Finn, during the bishop-elect's youth.

He also mentioned that several Sisters of St. Joseph, his teachers at St. Aidan School, who supported him along the way: Sisters Mary Ambrose, CSJ; Mary Clarita, CSJ; and Rita Marie, CSJ. His faculty members at Boston Latin School, while always raising the academic bar, also encouraged him in his vocational choice.

While he is busy as rector and will be even busier with the added responsibility of serving as an auxiliary bishop to Cardinal O'Malley, he enjoys reading, cooking and travel, chief among his favorite destinations are Italy, Austria, Germany and Eastern Europe.

Following his ordination in September, the bishop-elect will remain as rector of St. John Seminary for the foreseeable future.