

# Retirement?

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Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan, April 2014 *People of God*

There has been a great deal of discussion about my retirement plans. It first began with the Annual Catholic Appeal (ACA) message that I taped this year in which I said that I would be sending my letter of resignation as required by Canon Law to the Pope on July 9, my 75<sup>th</sup> birthday. I noted that it would take perhaps a year for Pope Francis to send a new archbishop. In meantime, I will be the Archbishop of Santa Fe.

The *Albuquerque Journal* has covered this issue with great interest. There was also an editorial thanking me for the work that I have done for the Catholic Church. The New Mexico State Senate also unanimously adopted a Memorial of Commendation for my work with the church and in the broader community. I am grateful that God has used me for His people and His Glory.

Many people have wished me well in my retirement as if I would be gone next week! Again, it will be a while before the new archbishop comes or is even appointed.

After Pope Francis appoints the new archbishop, I will continue to live in Albuquerque which has become my home. I want to be available to help in parish ministry when a priest needs assistance. We have priests who become ill or who need to go on vacation and I will be able to cover for them as my schedule allows. I became a priest to be a parish priest but I've had many other assignments that have put me in administrative roles and have kind of "deprived me" of the opportunity to be doing priestly parish work. I look forward to doing that when the new archbishop is appointed.

Some of the questions that the ACA taped message has generated are:

- Do you know who the next archbishop will be? No! It is Pope Francis who will make the appointment and it will be announced by the Vatican.
- Will pastors be changed when the new archbishop arrives? That will be up to the new archbishop.
- Will you live with the new archbishop? No, I will have my own home.
- Will there be major reorganization in the Catholic Center? That will be up to the new archbishop.
- What will your title be when you retire? It will be Archbishop Emeritus of Santa Fe.
- Will the Archbishop's St. Francis of Assisi Awards continue? That will be up to the new archbishop.
- Will you have a large retirement celebration? No. When the new archbishop is announced, things will move pretty quickly and our attention will turn to the installation of the new archbishop. I will celebrate my 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of priesthood with a Mass at the Cathedral Basilica on Friday, July 18, 2014 at 4:00 p.m. which is open to the public. I will have a private dinner for bishops, priests, family and a few friends which is by invitation only. I will also celebrate a Mass at the Catholic Center on Friday, July 11, 2014 followed by lunch (by invitation only) for the employees of the Catholic Center, some religious, and others who have been advisors over the years. Any associated costs are being covered by financial gifts from friends, priests and parishes who have chosen to do so. No archdiocesan funds are being used for any of this. I will consider these events as my retirement celebration, although I will continue to serve as archbishop until the new archbishop is announced.

In the meantime please pray for me as I pray for all of you that God will strengthen our Holy Catholic Church and bless all the people in it.