



Join us for a farewell celebration for Bishop Elect Joseph Nguyen on July 31 and his Episcopal Ordination & Installation on Aug. 25.

Vancouver Vicar General Joseph Nguyen replaces retiring Bishop Monroe

VANCOUVER, June 1, 2016 – Pope Francis has named the Archdiocese of Vancouver’s Vicar General, Father Joseph Phuong Nguyen, as the new Bishop of Kamloops.

Father Nguyen will take over from Bishop David Monroe, who retires having reached the mandatory retirement age of 75. Bishop Monroe has served Kamloops since 2002 and, like his successor, is a former vicar general of the Archdiocese of Vancouver.

Prior to Father Nguyen’s appointment as vicar general (second to the archbishop in the archdiocese) in 2013, he served at St. Jude’s Parish in Vancouver, Immaculate Conception in Delta, Corpus Christi in Vancouver, and as pastor of Our Lady of Mercy in Burnaby and St. Andrew’s in Vancouver.

Father Nguyen is the eldest of 10 children and was born in Vietnam. One brother is a priest in the Diocese of Hamilton, Ont., and two of his sisters are religious. He has spoken about growing up in a communist country and having a deep love of God at an early age. He began minor seminary at 11 and studied philosophy and theology in preparation for ordination to the priesthood. When Catholic institutions were taken over by the communist government, he was repeatedly imprisoned for training catechists.

With no hope of becoming a priest in Vietnam, he secretly planned to flee the country by boat. He nearly lost his life in the attempt and was arrested and imprisoned, suffering torture and malnutrition. Working in prison ministry in Vancouver he would say, “I know how they feel. I was there.”

He eventually escaped Vietnam but was injured in an auto accident, which left him in a coma and recovering for several months in a Philippines refugee camp.

He arrived in Canada unable to speak a word of English, studied English as a second language and was accepted at the Seminary of Christ the King in Mission. He was ordained a priest in 1992.

Vancouver Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB, congratulated the Catholic community in Kamloops, saying the diocese is getting a bishop who is an engaging homilist, quick to serve, and a strong proponent of priestly and religious vocations.

“His dedication to the priesthood is abundantly apparent,” said Archbishop Miller. “From opening Vianney House in Vancouver (a home for men discerning a call to the priesthood), to starting a newsletter on the priesthood and religious life, to his launching a vocations career fair, he is truly committed to encouraging vocations to the priesthood.”



The Archbishop said he was sorry to lose his friend and colleague, but that “Kamloops will benefit from this hard-working, compassionate and prayerful priest. As someone who has suffered real persecution for his faith, Father Joseph is an inspiring example of courageous Christian witness in our world.”

June 3 update: Fr. Joseph’s ordination as Bishop in Kamloops will be Thursday, Aug. 25, 2016. The Archdiocese of Vancouver will have an archdiocesan farewell celebration Sunday, July 31.