

Bishop Walter J. Schoenherr Retired Auxiliary Bishop Archdiocese of Detroit

Bishop Walter J. Schoenherr was born on February 28, 1920 in Detroit. He received his elementary education at St. Clement School, Center Line, and attended one year of high school there, before going on to Sacred Heart Seminary High School, Detroit, where he graduated. He studied for the priesthood at Sacred Heart Seminary, Detroit, and Mount St. Mary's Seminary, Norwood, Ohio, before completing his final six months in theology at SS. Cyril and Methodius Seminary, Orchard Lake.

Bishop Schoenherr was ordained in Detroit on October 27, 1945 by Cardinal Edward Mooney. He then served as associate pastor at St. David, St. Leo, St. Rose, and Presentation Parishes, all in Detroit, and at St. Bede Parish, Southfield. In 1961, he was appointed pastor of St. Aloysius Parish, in downtown Detroit. He was appointed pastor of Blessed Sacrament Cathedral, Detroit, in 1965.

Bishop Schoenherr was consecrated an Auxiliary Bishop of Detroit by Cardinal John Dearden in Blessed Sacrament Cathedral on May 1, 1968. He continued to serve as pastor of Blessed Sacrament Cathedral until June 15, 1977.

Among his many assignments, Bishop Schoenherr served as Cardinal Dearden's Delegate for the Clergy and also coordinator of the Offices of Delegate for Clergy, Delegate for Religious, and Delegate for the Laity. He was one of the original leaders in the Liturgical Commission and also worked on the Worship Commission of Synod '69.

Bishop Schoenherr was a board member of Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Center, the Michigan Welfare League, and the Michigan Coalition for Human Rights. He was also Region VI Episcopal Advisor for the National Association of Catholic Chaplains and a member of the Bishop's Committee on the Permanent Diaconate.

On July 1, 1977, Bishop Schoenherr was appointed to serve the South Region of the Archdiocese of Detroit, which was composed of the Dearborn Area, Downriver, Monroe, Southland, Southwest Detroit, and Western Wayne Vicariates. These Vicariates represented a total of 87 parishes. On October 1, 1991, the regions in the Archdiocese were reorganized and Bishop Schoenherr was asked to serve a total of 102 parishes.

On January 10, 1994 the regions of the Archdiocese were reorganized again and Bishop Schoenherr was appointed to serve an area which included Monroe County and other outlying areas of Wayne County, including the Dearborn, Downriver, Monroe, Northwest Wayne, Southland, and Western Wayne Vicariates.

On June 29, 1995, Cardinal Maida wrote to Bishop Schoenherr saying, "In accordance with Canon 401 and our Holy Father's acceptance of your letter of resignation dated March 7, 1995, and in keeping with our previous discussions, I hereby grant you retirement from active exercise of your Episcopal ministry as an Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Detroit, effective July 1, 1995."

On October 27, 1995, Bishop Schoenherr celebrated his 50th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood. He was a resident of the Senior Clergy Village in Livonia. Bishop Schoenherr entered eternal life on April 27, 2007, while a patient at St. Mary's Hospital, Livonia.