



The Most Rev. Bishop Bernard W. Schmitt - *Education and Religion*

Bernard Schmitt's concern for and dedication to Christ and Catholic education were developed at a young age. Following his graduation from Corpus Christi Grade School, Warwood, and Central Catholic High School, Wheeling, the young Bernard Schmitt discerned God's call to the priesthood. He began his studies for the priesthood at Saint Charles College, Catonsville, Maryland, and attended Saint Mary's Seminary in Baltimore, Maryland. Later in life, he pursued a postgraduate degree in guidance and counseling at Ohio University in Athens.

He was ordained to the priesthood on May 28, 1955 by Bishop Thomas J. McDonnell. His first assignment was as Associate Pastor of Saint Joseph Cathedral, Wheeling, while also serving as Master of Ceremonies to Archbishop John Joseph Swint. In 1963, he was appointed Diocesan Director of Vocations, Director of Propagation of the Faith, and Director of Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD). In 1966, Father Schmitt was appointed Rector of Saint Joseph Preparatory Seminary in Vienna, where he served until being appointed to his first pastorate at Saint Francis of Assisi Parish, St. Albans.

After ten years of service as pastor in St. Albans, Father Schmitt was appointed pastor of Saint Michael Parish, Wheeling, in 1982. It is here that Father Schmitt earned his reputation as a humble and capable church leader. While at Saint Michael, he continued his active involvement in Catholic School education at both the elementary and secondary levels.

Father Schmitt served at Saint Michael Parish until the call came on May 31, 1988 to be appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston. Father Schmitt was ordained Bishop on August 1, 1988. In October of that year, Bishop Schmitt was again appointed Diocesan Director of Vocations. Within a year, Bishop Schmitt was appointed the Seventh Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston on March 30, 1989 and was installed as Diocesan Bishop on May 17, 1989.

During his sixteen years as Bishop, he was appointed to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry, and the Committee on Marriage and Family, as well as to the Catholic Campaign for Human Development Committee. As Bishop, he demonstrated his ecumenism. He co-presented an annual service with the Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia and recognized the Jewish faith with an annual service to remember Kristallnacht. Bishop Schmitt was, and remains, a great champion for Catholic schools founded on the belief that parents are the primary educators of their children in the Catholic faith and that Catholic schools are the best in assisting parents in accomplishing this task.

On August 17, 2003, Bishop Schmitt submitted his resignation as Seventh Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston, in accord with the age limit set under canon law. Pope John Paul II accepted his resignation on December 9, 2004. Bishop Schmitt was elected Apostolic Administrator during the interim caused by his retirement and the election of a new Bishop. In retirement, Bishop Schmitt continues to serve the Diocese by giving retreats and working with Serra Clubs.

Bernard W. Schmitt was born on August 17, 1928 in Wheeling to Lawrence E. Schmitt and Eulalia R. Schiffer Schmitt.