

# **Most Reverend Richard John Sklba**

September 11, 1935 – November 21, 2024

With hope in the Resurrection, we commend to the Lord

**Most Reverend Richard John Sklba**

Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee

Titular Bishop of Castro

who died on November 21, 2024 at the age of 89.



Bishop Richard J. Sklba was born in Racine, Wisconsin, on September 11, 1935, and was baptized at Holy Trinity Parish on September 30, 1935, the feast of Saint Jerome who is the patron saint of Scripture students. He was confirmed, also at Holy Trinity Parish, on June 2, 1946.

After attending a public elementary school on the outskirts of the city of Racine, he spent two years at Saint Catherine's High School, Racine, before transferring to Saint Francis Minor Seminary, Milwaukee, to finish high school and begin college studies.

From 1954 to 1960, he studied at the Gregorian University, Rome, completing an undergraduate degree in philosophy and a graduate degree in theology. He was ordained to the priesthood in Rome for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee on December 20, 1959. He was assigned to Saint Mary's Parish, Elm Grove, on September 15, 1960 and served the parish as an assistant pastor for two years.

In 1962, he returned to Rome for three more years of study. While there, he attended the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome, and completed the licentiate degree in sacred Scripture. He completed his doctoral degree in biblical studies at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas of Aquinas (Angelicum), Rome. He was privileged enough to be present in Saint Peter's Basilica, Rome, for the opening session of the Second Vatican Council on October 11, 1962.

After returning to the United States, he spent the next 11 years teaching Scripture at Saint Francis de Sales Seminary, St. Francis, and served at Saint Veronica's Parish, Milwaukee on weekends. On July 19, 1976, he was appointed rector of the seminary by Archbishop Cousins.

He was ordained Auxiliary Bishop for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee on December 19, 1979. Over the years, Bishop Sklba served on various committees of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops including Priestly Life and Ministry, Doctrine, Liturgy, Permanent Diaconate, as well as Marriage and Family. He was appointed to several task forces including the Teaching Function of the Diocesan Bishop and the sub-committee for Inclusive Language. He chaired the sub-committee on the Review of Scripture Translations from 1991 to 2001.

Bishop Sklba served as chair of the USCCB's Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs from 2005-2008. In that capacity, he had the privilege of introducing the nation's religious leaders from several traditions including Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu and Jain to Pope Benedict XVI during the Holy Father's historic pastoral visit to the United States in April of 2008.

He was a member of the Catholic Biblical Association of America and served as its president in 1982. Over the years, he also participated in several archaeological expeditions to sites in Israel.

Active in the church's ecumenical and interreligious relationships on a national and local level, Bishop Sklba co-chaired the national Lutheran/Catholic Dialogue beginning in 1998. In February of 2006, Bishop Sklba was invited to attend the ninth General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Porto Alegre, Brazil, as a member of the official Vatican delegation headed by Cardinal Walter Kasper. His many professional memberships include the Catholic Theological Society of America and the Society for Biblical Literature. Bishop Sklba also published articles, books, papers and occasional book reviews. In 1988, he was awarded the Catholic Theological Society of America's John Courtney Murray Award for achievement in Theology.

Bishop Sklba was elected archdiocesan administrator by the College of Consultors in May of 2002, and served in that capacity until the then - Most Reverend Timothy Dolan was installed as Archbishop of Milwaukee on August 28, 2002. Bishop Sklba continued to serve as the Archdiocese of Milwaukee as an auxiliary bishop and vicar general under Archbishops Dolan and ListECKI. He also taught Scripture at Sacred Heart School of Theology, Hales Corners, from 2006 through 2009.

On September 11, 2010, the occasion of his 75th birthday, Bishop Sklba, as required by canon law, submitted his resignation. On October 18, 2010, the Feast of St. Luke the Evangelist, Pope Benedict XVI accepted Bishop Sklba's resignation. In retirement, he continued to minister to the faithful of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and the Family of Five Parishes.

**Visitation will take place on December 3, 2024 at St. Richard Church, 1503 Grand Avenue, Racine, Wisconsin from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. with Evening Prayer at 6:00 p.m. Visitation will take place again on December 4, 2024 at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, 812 N. Jackson Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 1:30 p.m. Burial will be in the Cathedral crypt immediately following the Mass.**

May he rest in peace.