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# Archbishop Mansell of Hartford retires; Toledo bishop named successor

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Pope Francis has accepted the resignation of Archbishop Henry Mansell of Hartford, Conn., and named as his successor Bishop Leonard Blair of Toledo, Ohio.

Mansell, who has headed the Hartford archdiocese since 2003, is 76. Canon law requires bishops to turn in their resignation to the pope at 75.

A native of Detroit, Blair, 64, was installed as Toledo's bishop in 2003.

The changes were announced Tuesday in Washington by Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano, apostolic nuncio to the United States.

Blair will be installed in Hartford Dec. 16 during a Mass to be celebrated at the Cathedral of St. Joseph.

He will be "warmly welcomed by the clergy, religious and laypeople of the archdiocese," Mansell said.

"Hartford is a beautiful archdiocese with tremendous developments that show us to be always seeking better experiences of church. It has been a special privilege for me to serve for the last 10 years as archbishop," he added.

Mansell also announced that in retirement, he will live at the rectory of St. Augustine Church in South Glastonbury, Conn.

In a farewell letter to all in the Toledo diocese, Blair wrote: "Whether we are deacons, priests or bishops, we all know that we are to serve where we are called. So I accept the new appointment from the Holy Father as God's will for me, and I embrace the challenge of making a new home in Hartford. At the same time it will not be easy for me to leave all of you."

"In my life I have experienced a variety of assignments -- parochial, educational, administrative -- in my home Archdiocese of Detroit, in Rome and here in Toledo," he continued. "I learned early on that whatever the position or the place, the true gift of God is to be found in the people with whom you live and work.

"I leave behind many co-workers and friends in this diocese whom I shall dearly miss, together with all of you. Thank you for your kindness and cooperation, your support and prayers."

Blair was born April 12, 1949, in Detroit. He attended Detroit's Sacred Heart Seminary and the Pontifical North American College in Rome. He earned a licentiate in sacred theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome, in 1978 and a doctorate in sacred theology in 1997 at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas, known as

the Angelicum. It also is in Rome.

Ordained a priest of the Detroit archdiocese June 26, 1976, he was ordained an auxiliary bishop of that archdiocese Aug. 24, 1999, and named bishop of Toledo in 2003. He chairs the U.S. bishops' catechism subcommittee and is a member of their doctrinal committee and the evangelization and catechesis committee.

Born Oct. 10, 1937, in New York City, Mansell was ordained a priest of the New York Archdiocese Dec. 19, 1962. He was ordained a New York auxiliary bishop Jan. 6, 1993. He was appointed bishop of Buffalo, N.Y., in April 1995 and then became Hartford's archbishop in October 2003.

Hartford Auxiliary Bishop Christie Macaluso called the naming of Blair to Hartford "an exciting appointment by Pope Francis of a very gifted, intelligent, energetic man of faith."

"I look forward with enthusiasm to his coming among us as our shepherd and assure him of our prayers and support as he assumes the shepherd's staff and leads the faithful of this archdiocese into the future," he added.

Supreme Knight Carl Anderson also welcomed the prelate to the Hartford archdiocese, where the international fraternal organization has its headquarters.

Blair "has shown himself to be a quintessential pastor and shepherd ... throughout his time in Michigan, at the Vatican and most recently in Ohio," said Anderson, who noted that the churchman has been a Knight himself for 19 years.

"We hope he will find in this appointment something of a homecoming," he added.

Hartford was established as a diocese in 1843 and created an archdiocese in 1953. It comprises three counties and covers 2,288 square miles. The area has a total population of more than 1.9 million people, out of which about 592,000, or 30 percent, are Catholic.

Once Blair is installed in Hartford, the Toledo diocese's College of Consultors, a group of priest advisers, has eight days to elect a diocesan administrator to oversee the daily operations of the diocese.

"The life and the work of the church continue even when we await the appointment of a new bishop," Fr. Monte Hoyles, diocesan chancellor, told the *Catholic Chronicle*, Toledo's diocesan newspaper. The administrator maintains the status quo of the diocese, but is also "responsible for making decisions, with the help of the College of Consultors, that need to be made," the priest added.

A Mass and reception in honor of Blair's new appointment is being planned for early December in Toledo.

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