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Former Virgin Islands Catholic Bishop George Murry Has Died

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George Murry

A former bishop of the Catholic Church in the Virgin Islands, George Murry, died Friday after a battle with leukemia. He was 71.

His death, at Memorial Sloan Kettering Hospital in New York, comes just days after he resigned as bishop of Youngstown, Ohio, due to a recurrence of his illness.

Popular with the Roman Catholic faithful in both island districts, Murry held leading roles in the Virgin Island Catholic Diocese from 1998-2007. He succeeded Elliot G. Thomas, and preceded the present bishop, Herbert Bevard.

According to the Catholic News Agency, Murry was initially diagnosed with leukemia in April 2018. He underwent a month of intensive chemotherapy treatment at Cleveland Clinic. In July 2019, he returned to the clinic for a reoccurrence of leukemia. Following his initial diagnosis, Murry stepped down as chair of the U.S. bishops' new Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism, as well as his role as chair of the conference's Committee on Catholic Education.

Murry was born in Camden, New Jersey. He entered the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) in 1972 and was ordained to the priesthood seven years later. Murry held a M.Div. degree from the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley, California, and a Ph.D. in American Cultural History from George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

He served in administrative roles in two Washington, D.C., high schools, as well as serving as a professor of American Studies at Georgetown University, and as Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of Detroit-Mercy.

In 1995, Pope John Paul II appointed him Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago. In 1998, the pope appointed him coadjutor bishop of St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, and on June 30, 1999, appointed him bishop of the territorial catholic diocese. Murry was then assigned to Youngstown, Ohio, a diocese he led from 2007 up to his retirement, four years before the mandatory retirement age of 75.