



Most Rev. Paul F. Tanner

Born: January 15, 1905, Peoria, Ill.

Educated: Marquette University; Kenrick Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.; St. Francis Seminary, Milwaukee, Wis.; and the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.

Ordained: May 30, 1931, Milwaukee, Wis.

Episcopal Ordination: December 21, 1965, Washington, D.C.

Named Bishop of St. Augustine: February 15, 1968

Died: July 19, 1994, Jacksonville



The Vatican turned to a seasoned administrator – Msgr. Paul F. Tanner – for St. Augustine’s seventh bishop.

Educated and ordained in the Diocese of Milwaukee, Tanner served in Wisconsin parishes for a decade before being named the assistant director of the Catholic Youth Organization of the National Catholic Welfare Conference in Washington, D.C.

In 1945, he was named NCWC assistant general secretary and in 1958 the general secretary. In 1965, he was ordained a bishop.

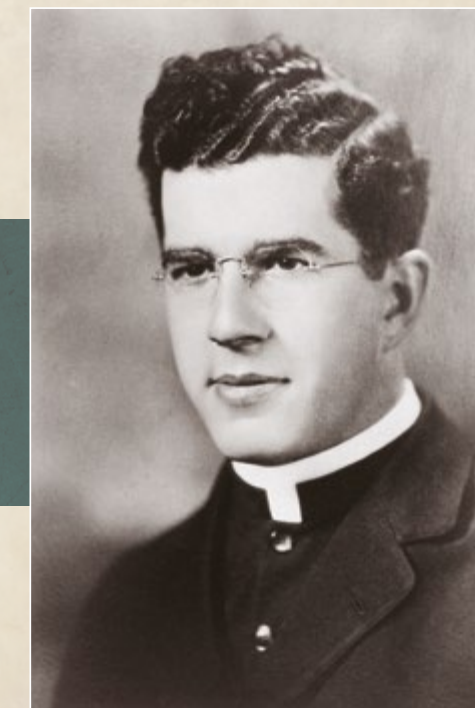
During his 27-year tenure in Washington, Tanner witnessed momentous changes in the country and the church: the election of the first Catholic president and his assassination, the civil rights movement, the women’s movement, the anti-war movement, and the Second Vatican Council.

After Vatican II, the NCWC was restructured into the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and renamed again to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. And in 1968, Tanner was named to the St. Augustine diocese.

The explosive growth that had occurred under Archbishop Hurley necessitated more changes for Florida Catholics. In 1968, the Diocese of St. Augustine was



Bishop Paul Tanner preaches at his installation Mass at the Cathedral of St. Augustine.



Father Paul Tanner

restructured and two new dioceses – St. Petersburg and Orlando – were formed.

The Diocese of Miami was designated an archdiocese.

And in 1975 a fifth diocese – Pensacola-Tallahassee – was formed. The Diocese of St. Augustine, which had once covered the entire state east of the Apalachicola River, had shrunk to 17 North Florida counties.

With the new structure came new leaders and the need for cooperation and communication. Tanner drew on his experience with the national church in Washington in helping to organize the Florida Catholic Conference in 1969.

The changes brought on by the Second Vatican Council were sweeping the church, too. They were both invigorating and confusing. The Mass was now celebrated in English, and the laity were empowered to take on leadership roles.

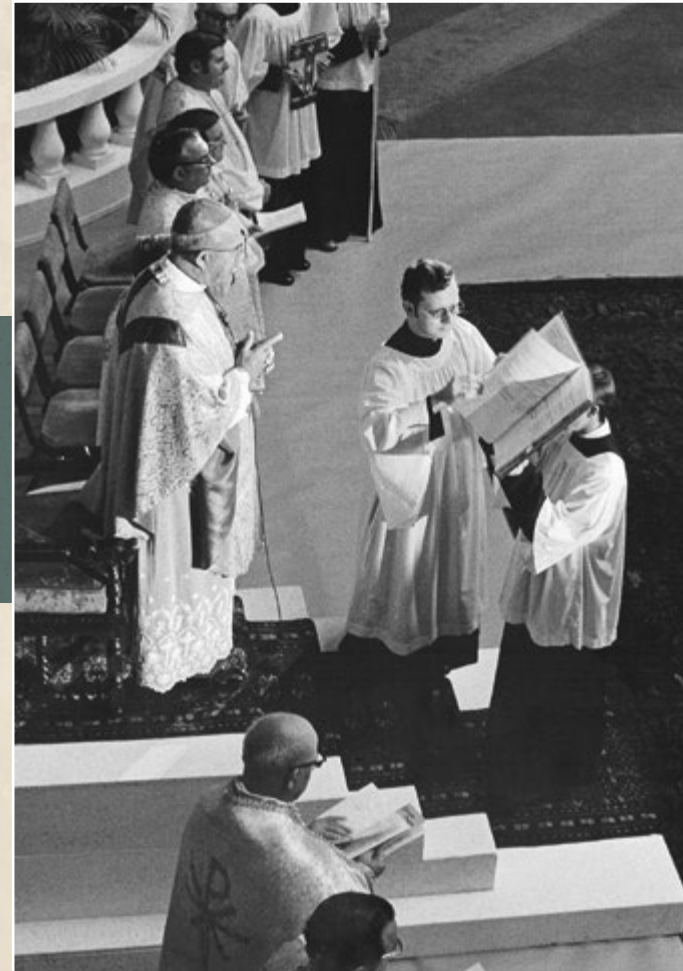
“The laity share just as much as the religious, the priests, the bishops and the pope in the broad mission of the church which is to bring Christ to every human being.”

Bishop Paul Tanner, at his installation





Bishop Paul Tanner was ordained a bishop on December 21, 1965 in Washington, D.C.



Bishop Paul Tanner was the main celebrant at the 1975 Eucharistic Congress in Jacksonville.



An advocate for Catholic education, Bishop Paul Tanner enjoyed visiting his Catholic schools.

Bishop Tanner formed a Liturgical Commission and encouraged the establishment of parish councils.

Many men left the priesthood after Vatican II, but others found their vocation. Bishop Tanner ordained 20 men including Father James R. Boddie, Jr., the state's first African-American priest.

Bishop Tanner was a strong critic of the 1973 Supreme Court decision, *Roe v. Wade*, which legalized abortion, and was an advocate for a Human Life Amendment to the Constitution. On the diocesan level, he set up an Office for Pro-Life Activities.

In 1979, he also protested the resumption of executions, which had been declared unconstitutional in 1972 by the Supreme Court.

Bishop Tanner oversaw the establishment of what has become some of the diocese's largest parishes – St. Catherine of Siena in Orange Park, Our Lady Star of the Sea in Ponte Vedra Beach, Holy Faith in Gainesville, Holy Family in Jacksonville and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Palm Coast.

Bishop Tanner retired at the age of 75 and lived until he was 89.