



Most Rev. Victor Galeone

Born: September 13, 1935, Philadelphia, Pa.

Educated: St. Charles College in Catonsville, Md.; St. Mary Seminary and University in Baltimore; and Pontifical North American College at the Gregorian University, Rome.

Ordained: December 18, 1960, Rome

Missionary to Peru: 1970-1975, 1978-1985, Society of St. James the Apostle

Appointed Bishop of St. Augustine: June 26, 2001

Episcopal Ordination: August 21, 2001, St. Augustine

Retired: April 27, 2011

The man chosen to be the diocese's first bishop of the 21st century had no desire to become a bishop, but perhaps the pope sensed that a man with a strong prayer life would be up to the task ahead.

Victor Galeone would have been happier in the mission fields of Peru where he had spent 11 years or continue as a parish priest in Baltimore, rather than enter the church hierarchy, but he would lead the diocese through a difficult decade.

Bishop Galeone grew up in a tight-knit Italian family. Even as a boy he had a spiritual bent, so no one was surprised when he announced that he had a vocation.

He grew up in the Archdiocese of Baltimore and after finishing his education in Rome he returned to Baltimore as a diocesan priest. He served in several parishes and taught at St. Paul Latin High School during the 1960s.

He felt called to mission work and twice served in Peru with the Society of St. James the Apostle during the 1970s and early 1980s.



“He was a humble person, an excellent leader, an excellent person as far as I was concerned. He was an outstanding priest, the kind of man who would make a good bishop.”

Cardinal William Keeler of Baltimore

In 1985, his bishop called him back to Baltimore, to work in parishes. He was the pastor of St. Agnes Parish in Catonsville, Md., and thinking about retiring and returning to the mission field, when out of the blue in 2001 the Apostolic Nuncio called with the news that he was the new bishop of the Diocese of St. Augustine.

He had no way of anticipating the challenges he would face.

Bishop Galeone was having his first staff meeting on September 11, 2001, when he received news that the United States was under attack by terrorists.

The following year the American church was rocked by accusations that priests had sexually abused children. The national scandal resulted in much soul-searching for the church and the implementation of mandatory training and screening procedures.

Archbishop John Favalora of Miami ordains Victor Galeone as bishop of St. Augustine in 2001.





Bishop Galeone incenses the altar at the blessing and dedication of San Sebastian's new church in 2007.



Bishop Victor Galeone meets with Pope John Paul II in Rome.



Bishop Galeone visits with children attending Camp I Am Special at Camp St. John.



Bishop Galeone at a news conference in defense of traditional marriage.



Bishop Galeone visits with children attending Camp I Am Special at Camp St. John.

And then the economic downturn of the Great Recession brought new burdens to the diocese. The major growth spurts in the previous decades had left the diocese in debt. Bishop Galeone was forced to make difficult decisions – staff layoffs and salary freezes for diocesan employees. A mission was established during his tenure, St. Peter Mission, west of the intercoastal waterway in Jacksonville.

Bishop Galeone championed the traditional family, natural family planning and protection of the unborn, which he

addressed in his first pastoral letter, *Marriage: A Communion of Life and Love*, which was translated into 14 languages.

He retired as bishop in 2011, the year he celebrated the 50th anniversary of his priestly ordination. He spent the early years of his retirement in a Trappist monastery, and today he lives in Baltimore.

In 2015 he published a book, *Joyful Good News: for Young and Old*.