

Announcement of the Death of the Most Reverend Frank J. Dewane, Bishop Emeritus of the Catholic Diocese of Venice in Florida

Southwest Florida Catholics mourn beloved shepherd

Venice, Fla., October 7, 2026 – With heartfelt sorrow Most Reverend Emilio E. Biosca, O.F.M. Cap., Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Venice in Florida, announces that the Most Rev. Frank J. Dewane, Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Venice in Florida, has died, after a brief illness.

“It is with profound sadness, yet with faith in the promise of the Resurrection, that I announce the passing of the Most Reverend Frank J. Dewane, Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Venice in Florida. Bishop Dewane died this morning at 3:00 a.m., October 7, 2026, on the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, at Sarasota Memorial Hospital, surrounded by close family and friends,” Bishop Biosca said.

Bishop Frank J. Dewane, ordained to the priesthood in 1988, was appointed by Pope Benedict XVI as the second bishop of the Diocese of Venice in 2006, following Bishop John J. Nevins, the Diocese’s founding bishop; Bishop Dewane served as bishop of the Diocese of Venice until his retirement earlier this year, on May 13, 2026. He served as the Diocese’s Apostolic Administrator until July 11, 2026, and as Bishop Emeritus until his death.

“As we mourn the loss of Bishop Dewane, we also give thanks to God for the gift of his life and for the many ways in which he served the Church,” said Bishop Biosca. “Bishop Dewane leaves behind a remarkable legacy of faithful service to the Church. For nearly two decades, he served as the spiritual shepherd of the Diocese of Venice. His years as a priest and bishop were marked by a sincere love for Christ, His Church, and the people entrusted to his pastoral care, especially those most in need. Please join me in praying for the repose of Bishop Dewane’s soul, that the Lord may welcome His faithful servant into eternal life.”

Funeral arrangements are pending and will be made available as soon as they are finalized. The Diocese of Venice asks all the members of the faithful to remember Bishop

Dewane in their prayers. May the soul of Bishop Dewane and the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.

O God, who chose your servant Bishop Dewane from among your priests and endowed him with pontifical dignity in the apostolic priesthood, grant, we pray, that he may also be admitted to their company forever. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever. Amen.

MEDIA CONTACT:

Karen Barry Schwarz | schwarz@dioceseofvenice.org

941-441-1118 (o) | 941-275-5183 (c)

Bishop Frank J. Dewane Episcopal Coat of Arms



In accordance with the heraldic tradition of the Roman Catholic Church, the Coat of Arms of a Bishop is composed of four elements: a shield with its charges (symbols); a golden processional cross; a green hat (galero) with twelve attached tassels; and appearing below everything, a scroll with the motto written in black. For his Coat of Arms, His Excellency Bishop Dewane selected a design that reflects his life and his heritage. A silver shield symbolizes transparency, truth and justice. The chevron, an antique heraldic figure, here in blue, symbolizes the truss of a building, that part under which the community, the Church, assembles. In the Coat of Arms of Bishop Dewane the chevron is charged with three golden crowns to recall the Cathedral of Venice, dedicated to the Epiphany. The crowns, taken from the Coat of Arms of the Diocese of Venice symbolize the three wise men, astrologers

who followed the star in search of Jesus Christ. The blue used for the chevron symbolizes the separation from worldly values and the ascent of the soul toward God. The Blessed Virgin, under whose protection Bishop Dewane places his new pastoral ministry, is symbolized on his Coat of Arms by a blue star. Further this recalls the Immaculate Conception, Patroness of the United States as well as the Marian devotion of Pope John Paul II, whom Bishop Dewane served while working for the Holy See. The shell is a figure used by Pope Benedict XVI in his coat of arms and expresses the filial devotion of Bishop Dewane to the Holy Father. In addition, the shell is the symbol of the pilgrim, therefore recalling the pilgrimage of Holy Mother Church on earth. The shell is in red, the color which signifies love so as to underline the importance of love and charity on our pilgrimage on earth. The sailboat is the symbol of the boat of Peter, the church, which is evidenced by the head of the mast shaped as a Cross. Also this boat appears in the Coat of Arms of the Diocese of Green Bay, the place of birth of Bishop Dewane and the Diocese of his priestly ordination. For these reasons it is placed at the base of the shield. For his motto, the Bishop adopted a phrase that describes his years of joyfully working in the area of justice and peace since his priesthood ordination and particularly the past fifteen years in his service to the Holy See: IUSTITIA, PAX, GAUDIUM. The passage on which the motto is based comes from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans 14:17: "... the kingdom of God is not food or beverage, but justice (iustitia), peace (pax) and joy (gaudium) in the Holy Spirit.