



Bishop Emeritus Arthur Tafoya: 1933 - 2018

Arthur N. Tafoya, 85, emeritus bishop of the Diocese of Pueblo, passed away at 3:30 a.m. on Saturday, March 24, 2018 at his home in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Bishop Tafoya was the third bishop of the Diocese of Pueblo, serving from 1980 to 2009.

Arthur N. Tafoya was born March 2, 1933 in Alameda, New Mexico. He had a calling to the priesthood at a young age and entered Immaculate Heart of Mary in Albuquerque at the age of 17. He attended the minor seminary from 1950 to 1956, when he entered St. Thomas Seminary in Conception, Missouri. He completed his studies and was ordained to the priesthood on May 12, 1962 at St. Francis Cathedral in Santa Fe, N.M.

His first assignment was assistant pastor at Holy Rosary Parish in Albuquerque. In 1965, he became pastor of a poor parish in northern New Mexico, Dixon and Velarde. Five years later he took the pastorate of a barrio church in Albuquerque called San Jose. After eight years at San Jose, Tafoya was appointed rector at Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary in Santa Fe, at which time he also served as vicar general of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe. He was ordained a bishop for the Diocese of Pueblo on September 10, 1980 by Archbishop James Casey of Denver assisted by Archbishop Sanchez of Santa Fe and Bishop Charles Buswell of Pueblo.

In his 29 years as the bishop of Pueblo, Bishop Tafoya ordained 20 priests and started the permanent diaconate program for the diocese.

He established the Diocesan Pastoral Council, an advisory, consultative body to the bishop. He also consolidated the chancery and pastoral center to be under one building at 1001 N. Grand in Pueblo before the construction of a new building in its current location at 101 N. Greenwood Street near the Riverwalk.

He created the Diocese of Pueblo Catholic Foundation, began the annual pilgrimage to Chimayo, the annual Vocations Walk in Antonito, the annual Rosary Sunday celebration held each October and continued to give importance to the annual Fiesta Day celebration as a part of the Colorado State Fair. He invited the Poor Clare Sisters, a cloister group, to come to Pueblo. Additionally, he also brought lay ministry programs to the diocese such as Level II and New Wine, as well as providing awards for outstanding lay people in the diocese.

During his tenure two churches were built: John Paul II in Pagosa Springs and St. Paul the Apostle in Pueblo West. The Cathedral of the Sacred Heart was also remodeled under his supervision. Additionally, many new churches were rebuilt. They included St. Francis/Our Lady of Guadalupe in Lamar, St. Joseph and Immaculate Heart of Mary both in Grand Junction, St. Michael in Canon City, Our Lady of the Assumption in Westcliffe and the Shrine of St. Therese in Pueblo.

Bishop Tafoya served the U.S. Bishops as chairman of the Latin America Committee, chairman for the Human Development committee and served on the American Board of Catholic Admissions.