

Cardinal Bevilacqua resigns

Jerry Filteau/CNS

WASHINGTON — Pope John Paul II July 15 accepted the resignation of Cardinal Anthony J. Bevilacqua of Philadelphia and named Archbishop Justin F. Rigali of St. Louis to succeed him.

Cardinal Bevilacqua, who turned 80 in June, has headed the Philadelphia Archdiocese since 1988. For the past two-and-a-half years he has been the oldest active U.S. bishop.

Archbishop Rigali, 68, has been archbishop of St. Louis since 1994. Before that he spent 30 years in Vatican service, culminating in posts as president of the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy in Rome, 1985-89, and secretary of the Vatican Congregation for Bishops, 1989-94.

Archbishop Gabriel Montalvo, papal nuncio to the United States, announced the changes in Washington.

Archbishop Rigali's installation in Philadelphia is tentatively scheduled to take place in October. Until then, he and Cardinal Bevilacqua will continue to lead their respective archdioceses as apostolic administrators.

Cardinal Bevilacqua, originally a

priest of the Diocese of Brooklyn, N.Y., has been a bishop since 1980. He headed the Pittsburgh Diocese from 1983 until 1988, when he was made archbishop of Philadelphia. Pope John Paul made him a cardinal in June 1991.

Justin Joseph Rigali was born in Los Angeles April 19, 1935. He was ordained a priest of that archdiocese April 25, 1961, after theological studies at St. John's Seminary in Camarillo, Calif., earning his theology degree from The Catholic University of America in Washington.

After six months in parish work, he was sent to Rome in October 1961 for graduate studies in canon law, earning a doctorate in 1964. When the Second Vatican Council began, he served as a priest-assistant at St. Peter's Basilica for the 1962 and 1963 sessions.

In 1964-66 he attended the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy, the training ground in Rome for priests entering Vatican diplomatic service.

He was assigned to diplomatic service in Madagascar from 1966 until 1970, when he returned to Rome as director of the English section of the

Vatican Secretariat of State and chief English-language translator for Pope Paul VI.

The then-Msgr. Rigali remained in that post after Pope John Paul's election in 1978, and he usually traveled with the pope on his many visits to English-speaking countries. He accompanied the pope to the United States in 1979 and again in 1987.

In 1985 the pope personally ordained him a bishop, giving him the rank of archbishop and naming him president of the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy. He was the first American to head the church's diplomatic school in its 284-year history.

During his nearly three decades as a Vatican official Archbishop Rigali also worked in various Rome parishes and seminaries and was chaplain for many years to the cloistered nuns at the Monastery of St. Joseph in Rome.

He was appointed the eighth bishop and seventh archbishop of St. Louis Jan. 25, 1994, and installed there March 15 of that year.

In his nine years there he has continued to play a role in the wider church as well.

BISHOP PLEADS INNOCENT TO HIT-AND-RUN CHARGE

PHOENIX (CNS) — Bishop Thomas J. O'Brien, former head of the Phoenix Diocese, pleaded innocent at his arraignment July 7 on a felony charge of leaving the scene of a fatal accident.

The 67-year-old bishop resigned as bishop of Phoenix June 18, the day after he was charged in the June 14 accident. The Vatican named Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan of Santa Fe, N.M., to administer the diocese until a new bishop is installed.

Bishop O'Brien's next court appearance was set for Aug. 11. He is free on \$45,000 bail. If convicted, he could face up to 45 months in prison.

Prosecutors say the bishop was not impaired by alcohol when he allegedly struck a pedestrian, Jim Reed, the night of June 14. Reed, 43, was crossing the street in the dark in the middle of the block and tests revealed he had a blood-alcohol level more than twice the state's legal limit for driving.

Bishop O'Brien, whose car was identified by witnesses at the scene, said he thought he had hit a dog or cat or that someone had hit the car with a rock. Authorities say it is unlikely he would be facing charges if he had remained on the scene.

Police said the bishop's tan Buick Park Avenue, which had a damaged front end and its windshield smashed on the passenger side, was the first of two vehicles that hit Reed. They were still searching for the second car, which also left the scene.

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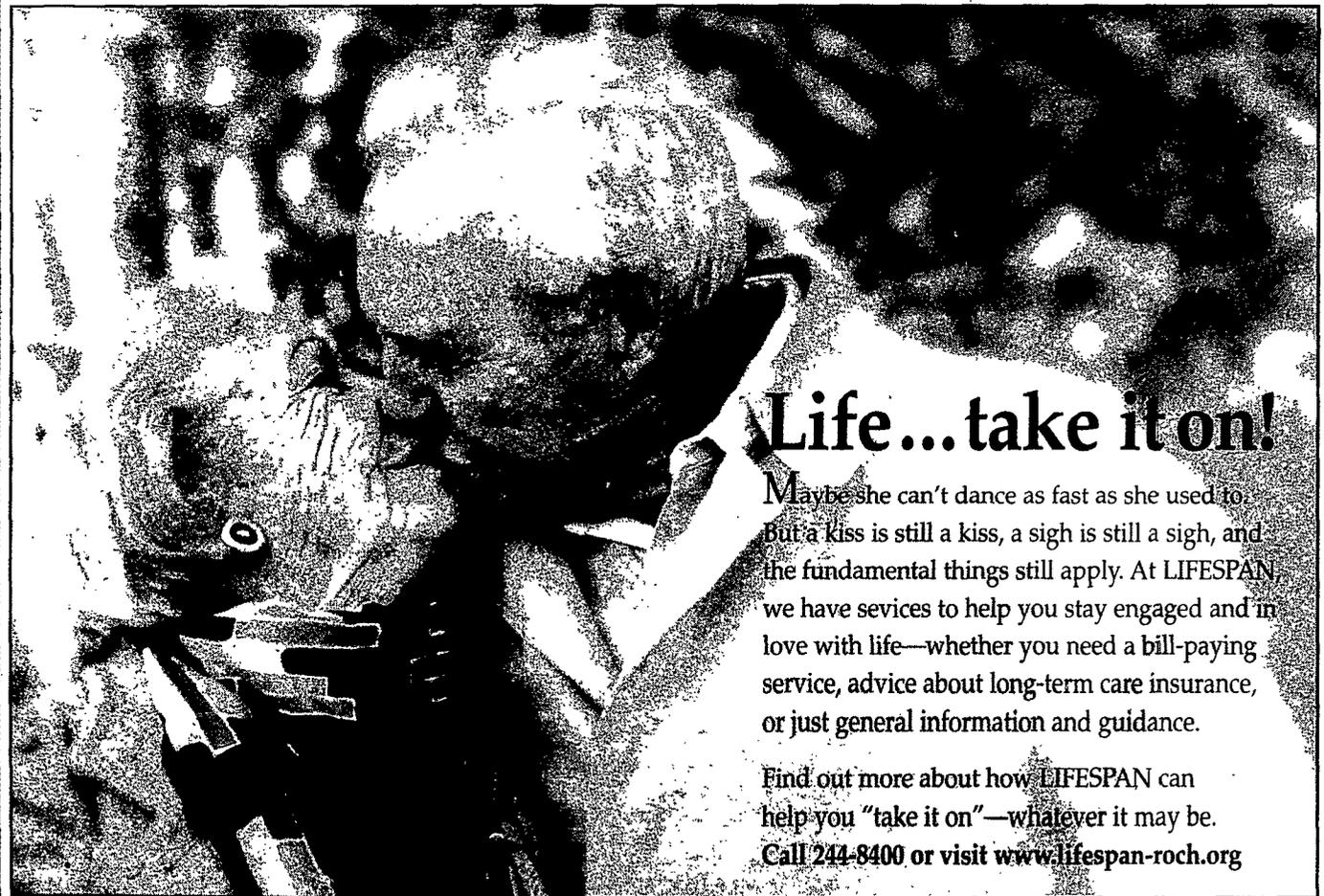
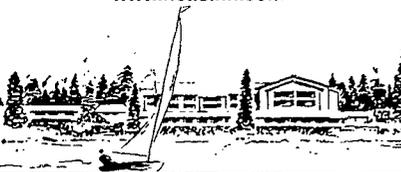
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