



Most Reverend Thomas J. Olmsted was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Lincoln, Nebraska, July 2, 1973. He was installed as the Bishop of the Diocese of Phoenix, December 20, 2003. Prior to his arrival in Phoenix he served as Bishop of Wichita, Kansas, after being ordained Coadjutor Bishop on April 20, 1999. Before serving in Wichita, he served as the Rector / President of the Pontifical College Josephinum, a Catholic seminary in Columbus, Ohio.

Since 1974, he has been a member of the Jesus Caritas fraternity of priests, and thus has been deeply influenced by the witness and wisdom of Blessed Charles de Foucauld and by the prayers and encouragement of many brother priests.

For 16 years, Bishop Olmsted lived in Rome, Italy, where he obtained a Master of Arts in Theology, a Doctorate in Canon Law, and worked more than nine years in the Secretariat of State of the Holy See. During the nine years of serving in the Holy See, he resided at the Pontifical North American College and assisted seminarians with spiritual direction. He speaks and writes Italian and Spanish.

Having been reared on a family farm on the Kansas – Nebraska border, he attended a single-room grade school near Oketo, Kansas, and a small rural high school in Summerfield, Kansas. His first contact with Catholic schools came when he entered St. Thomas Seminary College in Denver, Colorado, from which he graduated in 1969, with a B.A. in Philosophy. His interest in nature and rural life continues, while his many years in Rome has fostered a devoted loyalty to the universal Church.



Date of birth: January 21, 1947

Date of ordination: July 2, 1973

1973 – 1976: First assignment as a priest: Associate Pastor at the Cathedral of the Risen Christ (Lincoln, Nebraska)

1976 – 1979: Doctoral Studies at the Gregorian University (Rome, Italy)

1979 – 1988: Assistant at the Secretariat of State of the Holy See, and Assistant Spiritual Director at Pontifical North American College (Rome, Italy)

1989 – 1993: Pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Parish (Seward, Nebraska)

1993 – 1997: Dean of Personal Formation at the Pontifical College Josephinum (Columbus, Ohio)

1997 – 1999: Rector / President of the Pontifical College Josephinum (Columbus, Ohio)

1999 – 2001: Coadjutor Bishop of the Diocese of Wichita, Kansas

1999 – 2007: USCCB Committee on Priestly Formation

2000 – 2003: Board of Directors, Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.

2000 – 2003: USCCB Committee on Consecrated Life

2001 – 2003: Bishop of the Diocese of Wichita, Kansas

2003 – present: Bishop of the Diocese of Phoenix, Arizona

2005 – 2007: USCCB Administrative Committee

2005 – 2007: Chair of USCCB Committee on Priestly Formation

2005-2008: Member, USCCB National Advisory Council

2008 – 2009: Apostolic Administrator of Diocese of Gallup

2008 – 2011: Member USCCB Committee on Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Affairs