



ARCHDIOCESE OF AGAÑA

May 31, 2025

Archbishop's message announcing the passing of Archbishop Emeritus Byrnes

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

With deep sadness, I share news that Archbishop Emeritus Michael J. Byrnes has passed away. Our dear friend and beloved former Archbishop of Agaña entered eternal life at about 9:41 this morning. The Most Rev. Edward J. Weisenburger, Archbishop of Detroit personally notified me.

Archbishop Emeritus Byrnes died peacefully in the care of close friends and medical staff while resting in hospice care in Detroit. He was contending with the progressively worsening illness of Alzheimer's disease which prompted his resignation as Archbishop of Agaña in March of 2023.

Please join me, his brother clergy, religious and all faithful as we remember this courageous holy man with love and prayer. In a separate announcement, Father Paul Gofigan, our Vicar General and Chairman of the Archdiocesan Liturgical Commission (ALC) will announce specific information regarding the Requiem Mass and our liturgical remembrance of Archbishop Emeritus Byrnes.

In the meantime I ask pastors and parochial administrators to include Mass intentions for our dear Archbishop Emeritus during their Masses.

My predecessor as the shepherd of the Catholic faithful in Guam will always be remembered for the tremendous faith, dedication, and perseverance he showed as he led the archdiocese during some of the most difficult years in the history of our Church on Guam. He demonstrated great courage, faith and obedience on Oct. 31, 2016 when he answered the call from Pope Francis to travel many miles away to shepherd our people in a place he knew little about. The late pope appointed him first as coadjutor archbishop with special faculties of the Archdiocese of Agaña. He was the archbishop entrusted with making the difficult decisions related to the Covid pandemic, bankruptcy and the hundreds of lawsuits filed against the church stemming from the grave sins of clergy sexual abuse by past clerics and laity.

Michael Jude Byrnes has a cherished place in the history of our Church on Guam as well in the



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hearts of our people. We grieve his death but also give thanks to our merciful God for the gift of this devout servant, leader, and friend whom he bestowed to us.

Thank you for your prayers now and throughout these last several years. I know many of you have continued to say prayers and express love and concern for the former archbishop, even while his health was beginning to decline on Guam.

Sincerely in Christ,

/s/Most Reverend Ryan P. Jimenez, D.D.
Archbishop of Agaña