

Pope retires liberal Bishop Gumbleton: Retiring bishop says he was abused as teen

by [Religion News Service staff](#) in the [February 21, 2006](#) issue

Pope Benedict XVI has accepted the resignation of Detroit auxiliary bishop Thomas Gumbleton, just two weeks after the long-serving and outspoken bishop disclosed that he had been molested by a priest 60 years ago.

Gumbleton, 76, was required under church law to submit his resignation when he turned 75 last year. At that time, he petitioned to remain in office. In his statement January 26 to parishioners at St. Leo's Church, where he has served as pastor since 1993, Gumbleton said that when his request was refused he "decided to end the discussion."

He was the youngest American priest to become a bishop when he was appointed in 1968. He is one of the longest-serving—and most liberal—Catholic bishops in the United States. Gumbleton has long been active in antiwar causes and has challenged the church's treatment of gays and lesbians.

Gumbleton revealed on January 11 that he had been abused by a priest as a teenager—the first U.S. bishop to ever admit to abuse by a cleric. Church officials in Detroit said Gumbleton had never told them about the abuse.

"I will continue to exercise my ordained ministry as bishop as long as I am physically capable of doing so," he said about his retirement. "This means that I will continue to teach, preach, celebrate sacraments and carry on my work for justice and peace wherever I am called to do so." *-Religion News Service*