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by Joshua J. McElwee

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Pope Francis has accepted the resignation of Tegucigalpa, Honduras Auxiliary Bishop Juan Pineda Fasquelle, who had reportedly been accused of financial and sexual misconduct.

Pineda, age 57, had served Catholics in the Honduran capital under the leadership of Cardinal Oscar Rodríguez Maradiaga, who is known as an influential papal advisor and serves on the nine-member Council of Cardinals.

The Vatican announced the move in a short note July 20 that did not give any reason for the resignation. The traditional retirement age for bishops is 75.



Former Tegucigalpa, Honduras Auxiliary Bishop Juan Pineda Fasquelle seen in February at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

Francis had sent an Argentinian bishop last year to look into the administration of the Tegucigalpa archdiocese. While the bishop's report on the matter was not made public, the Italian magazine *L'Espresso* reported last December that it contained accusations of misuse of funds.

A later report in National Catholic Register said the investigation also revealed accusations of sexual misconduct against Pineda, brought forward by former seminarians of the archdiocese.

The Vatican press office did not immediately respond to a request for clarification about the reasons for Pineda's resignation. As of this writing, the website for the Tegucigalpa archdiocese continues to list Pineda as its auxiliary bishop.

Rodríguez, who has led the church in the Honduran capital since 1993, has said Francis continues to support his leadership.

In a December 2017 interview with an archdiocesan TV channel, which was later republished by the official Vatican News website, the cardinal said the pontiff had called him and said: "I'm sorry for all the evil they have done against you."

[Joshua J. McElwee is NCR Vatican correspondent. His email address is jmcelwee@ncronline.org. Follow him on Twitter: @joshjmac.]

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