News



Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles, vice president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, speaks during the fall general assembly of the conference in Baltimore Nov. 11, 2019. (CNS/Bob Roller)



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Archbishop Jose Gomez of Los Angeles was elected to a three-year term as president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops during the bishops' fall general assembly in Baltimore.

The native of Mexico was chosen Nov. 12 with 176 votes from a slate of 10 nominees.

Gomez, 67, is the first Latino to be elected president. He has served as conference vice president for the past three years, working alongside Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, the outgoing president. His term as president begins when the assembly ends.

The Los Angeles prelate has been a leading advocate of immigrant rights, often voicing support for newcomers as they face growing restrictions being implemented by the Department of Homeland Security and other federal agencies.

In subsequent voting, Archbishop Allen Vigneron of Detroit, conference secretary, was elected conference vice president. He was elected on the third ballot by 151-90 in a runoff with Archbishop Timothy Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services.

Under U.S. bishops' conference bylaws, after the election for president, the vice president is elected from the remaining nine candidates.

The two top officers begin their terms at the conclusion of the fall assembly Nov. 13.

In voting for a new secretary, the assembly elected Archbishop Broglio, 112-87, over Bishop Daniel Thomas of Toledo, Ohio. Archbishop Broglio will serve through the end of the term in 2021.

The bishops also voted for the chairman of one committee, chairmen-elect of five other conference committees and three representatives on the board of Catholic Relief Services, which is the U.S. bishops' overseas relief and development agency.

In the first committee vote, there was a tie vote between Archbishop Thomas Wenski of Miami and Bishop George Murry of Youngstown, Ohio, for chairman of the Committee for Religious Liberty. Each candidate received 121 votes, but Murry, at 70, became chairman under the bishops' conference bylaws because he is the older of the two candidates. Archbishop Wenski is 69.

The committee had been chaired by Archbishop Joseph Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, but he stepped down earlier this year to undergo treatment for bladder and prostate cancer. Murry will serve the remaining year of Kurtz's term.

Vote tallies for committee chairmen-elect are:

- Committee on Canonical Affairs and Church Governance: Archbishop Jerome Listecki of Milwaukee elected over Bishop Mark Bartchak of Altoona-Johnstown, Pennsylvania, 144-97.
- Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs: Bishop Daniel Talley of Memphis, Tennessee, elected over Bishop Steven Lopes of the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter, 123-114.
- Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis: Auxiliary Bishop Andrew Cozzens of St. Paul and Minneapolis, elected over Bishop Thomas Daly of Spokane, Washington, 151-88.
- Committee on International Justice and Peace: Bishop David Malloy of Rockford, Illinois, elected over Bishop Jaime Soto of Sacramento, California, 140-101.
- Committee on Protection of Children and Young People: Bishop James Johnson of Kansas City-St. Joseph, Missouri, was elected over Bishop Shawn McKnight of Jefferson City, Missouri, 167-77.

Each chairman-elect will begin his three-year term as chairmen at the end of the 2020 fall general assembly.

In addition, several chairmen-elect chosen last year will become committee chairmen at the end of this year's assembly and will serve three-year terms:

- Committee on Catholic Education: Bishop Michael Barber of Oakland, California.
- Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations: Bishop James Checchio of Metuchen, New Jersey.
- Committee on Divine Worship: Archbishop Leonard Blair of Hartford, Connecticut.
- Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development: Archbishop Paul Coakley of Oklahoma City.
- Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth: Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone of San Francisco.
- Committee on Migration: Auxiliary Bishop Mario Dorsonville of Washington.

A final vote was taken for three seats on the CRS board. Elected were Bishop Frank Caggiano of Bridgeport, Connecticut; Bishop Mark Seitz of El Paso, Texas; and Bishop Anthony Taylor of Little Rock, Arkansas.

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