News



Bishop Mitchell T. Rozanski of Springfield, Mass., and other U.S. bishops from the New England states arrive to concelebrate Mass in the crypt of St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican Nov. 7, 2019. On June 10, 2020, Pope Francis accepted the resignation of Archbishop Robert J. Carlson of St. Louis and named Bishop Rozanski as his successor. (CNS/Paul Haring)

by Catholic News Service

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Pope Francis has accepted the resignation of Archbishop Robert J. Carlson of St. Louis and has named Bishop Mitchell T. Rozanski of Springfield, Massachusetts, as his successor.

Francis also appointed Redemptorist Father Bruce A. Lewandowski as an auxiliary bishop of Baltimore. He currently is the pastor at Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Southeast Baltimore.

Carlson, who has headed the St. Louis Archdiocese since 2009, is 75, the age at which canon law requires bishops to turn in their resignation to the pope. He turns 76 June 30. Rozanski, 61, has been Springfield's bishop since 2014.

The resignation and appointments were announced by Archbishop Christophe Pierre, the Vatican nuncio to the United States, June 10 in Washington.

"I am honored to have served as leader of the Archdiocese of St. Louis for more than a decade," Carlson said.

"This large and generous community of faithful Catholics will continue to encourage me in my faith journey," he said shortly after his successor's appointment was announced. He said he knows Rozanski "will cherish his new ministry," and with him as the archdiocese's new shepherd, Carlson said he is "confident in the future of God's strong church in St. Louis."

The new archbishop will be installed during an Aug. 25 Mass in the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis.

Speaking in English and Spanish at a morning news conference at the cathedral, where he was introduced by Carlson, Rozanski called it "a joy and a privilege to be called to serve as the 10th archbishop of St. Louis."

The crowd of media and archdiocesan staff on hand for his introduction was small because of social-distancing measures due to the coronavirus.

One reporter asked how he will reach out to the diverse groups in the archdiocese and make them feel welcomed by the church. Rozanski replied by describing how, in the Springfield Diocese, it has become his custom to purposefully walk through his

neighborhood regularly and talk to the neighbors, many often gathered in a group.

One of those neighbors told him right after the May 25 death of George Floyd at the hands of a police officer that this regular gathering of people is "what we need to do. We need to get together to talk, to get to know one another."

"If we look at the ministry of Jesus, he approached everyone who came to him. He was not afraid," Rozanski said. Jesus sets this example and Pope Francis "does the same," he added. People getting along with one another "begins by getting to know one another," he said, "so we see every person's dignity and see that we have so much to bring to each other."

Rozanski had been a Baltimore auxiliary bishop for 10 years when Pope Francis named him to head the Springfield Diocese. He was born and raised in Baltimore and attended Catholic schools there. He was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Baltimore Nov. 24, 1984.

In Baltimore, because of pandemic restrictions, Archbishop William E. Lori announced the appointment of a new auxiliary bishop for that archdiocese via video messages in English and Spanish.



St. Louis Archbishop Robert J. Carlson delivers the homily Jan. 23, 2020, during a Mass for youth from his archdiocese attending the annual Generation Life pilgrimage, held in Arlington, Va. On June 10, 2020, Pope Francis accepted the resignation of Archbishop Carlson and named Bishop Mitchell T. Rozanski of

Springfield, Mass., as his successor. (CNS/St. Louis Review/Lisa Johnston)

Lori thanked Francis for this appointment and expressed gratitude to the Congregation of the Holy Redeemer, known as the Redemptorists, for its generosity in sharing Bishop-designate Lewandowski's pastoral gifts in the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

In his role as pastor of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Baltimore and as the archbishop's delegate for Hispanic Catholics, Bishop-designate Lewandowski "has demonstrated the true heart of a shepherd, not only for his own parish community, but also for all in need of support and compassion in the city of Baltimore and throughout the archdiocese," the archbishop said.

He asked the faithful of the archdiocese to join him in praying that God "will abundantly bless" the bishop-designate "in his new ministry to the people of the Archdiocese of Baltimore."

Lori said that for the foreseeable future, the bishop-designate would continue serving in his current roles. He will be ordained a bishop Aug. 18 at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen in Baltimore's Homeland neighborhood.

Bruce Alan Lewandowski was born June 8, 1967, turning 53 just two days before his appointment as a bishop was announced. He is originally from Toledo, Ohio.

He attended grade school at his home parish, St. Gerard in Lima, Ohio, and then went to live at St. Mary's Seminary High School, the Redemptorist minor seminary, at age 14. He studied at St. Alphonsus College, the Redemptorist seminary in Suffield, Connecticut, and at the Washington Theological Union for his graduate studies.

He professed vows as a Redemptorist in 1988 and was ordained a Redemptorist priest in 1994 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington.

Bishop-designate Lewandowski has served parishes in New York, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Maryland.

He expressed his thanks to Francis and Lori.

"I am very happy to call Baltimore my home and the archdiocese my home. It's just a wonderful honor and privilege that I've received," he said. "I'm home. I'm home."

Baltimore Auxiliary Bishop Adam J. Parker, moderator of the curia, welcomed the appointment of the new bishop as a great blessing and sign of hope, particularly during this time of global and national crises that include a global pandemic and protests around the country against systemic racism.

"He is a staunch advocate for justice who works tirelessly to break down barriers on behalf of those who are oppressed in keeping with the mandate of the Gospel of Jesus Christ," Parker said of the bishop-designate. He thanked the Holy Spirit and Pope Francis "for giving us the very bishop we need right now."

He told the Catholic Review, the archdiocesan online media outlet, he is "thrilled at the prospect of working alongside him."

"He is a true disciple who is undaunted in his proclamation of the word of God both in the manner in which he leads the parish of Sacred Heart of Jesus/Sagrado Corazon de Jesus and in the manner in which he lives," Parker said.

Bishop-designate Lewandowski said he looks forward to working more closely with Parker and retired Auxiliary Bishop Denis J. Madden and the staff at the Catholic Center, the priests, deacons, religious and lay faithful of the archdiocese.

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