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Kerry Alys Robinson is pictured in front of St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome. (CNS/Courtesy of Kerry Alys Robinson)

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Kerry Alys Robinson has been named as the next president and CEO of Catholic Charities USA, the organization representing the interests of its 167 member organizations dedicated to carrying out the domestic humanitarian work of the Catholic Church in the United States.

When Robinson, currently an executive partner of Leadership Roundtable, begins her tenure Aug. 23, she becomes the second layperson and second woman ever to lead CCUSA, the group said.

In a July 25 statement, CCUSA board chair Neal Black said Robinson's "entire professional life has been devoted to serving and bettering our church."

"After an exhaustive national search, our board voted unanimously and enthusiastically to appoint Kerry to this vital role," Black said. "We are confident that the Catholic Charities network and the millions of vulnerable people it serves each year will greatly benefit from Kerry's extraordinary passion, expertise and insight."

CCUSA said in her role at Leadership Roundtable, an organization of laity, religious and clergy working together to promote best professional practices of the Catholic Church in the U.S., Robinson served as its founding executive director and played a defining role in its growth and success. Robinson also is the executive director of the Opus Prize Foundation, which awards grants to ministries that alleviate human suffering.

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In a July 25 statement, Robinson said, the Gospels "call Catholics and all people of good will to serve those most in need of our aid."

"The staff and volunteers of Catholic Charities agencies around the country answer that call every day: feeding the hungry, comforting the afflicted and welcoming the stranger," Robinson said. "I am deeply honored and profoundly humbled to be a part of this life-giving mission."

At Leadership Roundtable, Robinson's work included examining ways to incorporate the laity more fully into the work of the church and helping church leaders solve difficult challenges. At the invitation of the Vatican, she also has advised the Catholic

Church on how to empower women leaders in that work.

Cardinal-designate Christophe Pierre, the apostolic nuncio to the U.S., said in a July 25 statement that Robinson "is a woman of the Church and brings to CCUSA her love for Christ and wide experience of engagement with the Gospel, particularly concern for the poor and vulnerable."

"Kerry has a great ability to build relationships," he added. "I am sure her many gifts and talents will further the CCUSA mission and bring hope to the many people served."

Robinson succeeds Dominican Sr. Donna Markham, who retires later this summer after nine years.

"I could not be more pleased that Kerry Robinson is stepping into this role that has meant so much to me," Markham said in a statement. "I am confident that her visionary leadership, devotion to the Church and sincere commitment to serving those in need will bring out the best in our staff, volunteers and supporters."