News



Pope Francis greets Bishop Joe S. Vásquez of Austin, Texas, during a Jan. 20, 2020, meeting with U.S. bishops from Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas during their "ad limina" visits to the Vatican. On Jan. 20, 2025, the pope accepted the resignation of Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston and named the Austin prelate as his successor. (CNS/Vatican Media)

by OSV News

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Washington, D.C. — January 21, 2025

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Pope Francis has accepted the resignation of Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston and named as his successor Bishop Joe S. Vásquez of Austin, Texas.

DiNardo has headed the Texas archdiocese since 2006, and a year later Pope Benedict XVI elevated him to the College of Cardinals. On May 23, 2024, he turned 75, the age at which canon law requires bishops to submit their resignation to the pope. The cardinal is a former president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Vásquez, 67, has headed the Diocese of Austin since 2010. Additionally, he served as apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Tyler, Texas from November 2023 to December 2024.

The resignation and appointment were publicized in Washington Jan. 20 by Cardinal Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States.

"I am delighted by the appointment of Bishop Vásquez as the next Archbishop of Galveston-Houston," said DiNardo in a statement. "I give gratitude to the Holy Father for naming an experienced, prayerful, and humble Shepherd to lead this local Church."

His successor expressed gratitude to God "for bestowing this responsibility on me and I am humbled by this appointment. With God's grace, I pledge to serve the needs of this local church to the best of my ability."

He will be installed as Galveston-Houston's ninth archbishop March 25 at the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Houston. Of Mexican American descent, Vásquez is one of 26 active Hispanic Catholic bishops in the U.S.

His episcopal motto is "Sigueme," Spanish for "Follow me," in reference to Jesus' words to Peter in the Gospel of St. John.

Benedict appointed him the fifth bishop of the Diocese of Austin on Jan. 26, 2010. The central Texas diocese is home to more than 700,000 Catholics across 25 counties.

Before his appointment to Austin, the newly named archbishop was an auxiliary of the archdiocese he will now head. He was named auxiliary bishop of Galveston-

Houston Nov. 30, 2001, by St. John Paul II and ordained early the following year. At the time of his episcopal ordination, he was the youngest bishop in the United States.

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The eldest of six children, Joe Steve Vasquez was born in Stamford, Texas, July 9, 1957. He attended the University of St. Thomas in Houston, where he earned a bachelor's degree in theology, and the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, where he earned a licentiate in sacred theology. He was ordained a priest for the Diocese of San Angelo, Texas, in 1984.

After his ordination, Vasquez served from 1985-87 as associate pastor at St. Joseph Parish in Odessa, Texas, and from 1987-97 as pastor at St. Joseph Parish in Fort Stockton, Texas. In 1997, he was named pastor of St. Joseph Parish, San Angelo, where he served until his appointment as a Galveston-Houston auxiliary.

An Ohio native who was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, DiNardo succeeded Archbishop Joseph A. Fiorenza as Galveston-Houston's shepherd on Feb. 28, 2006. Two years earlier he had been named coadjutor bishop (later coadjutor archbishop) of Galveston-Houston in January 2004.

On Dec. 29, 2004, St. John Paul elevated the Diocese of Galveston-Houston to the status of a metropolitan archdiocese, creating a second archdiocese in Texas. Fiorenza was named the first archbishop of Galveston-Houston, and DiNardo became the coadjutor archbishop.

Before his Texas appointment, DiNardo was the bishop of Sioux City, Iowa. He was appointed coadjutor bishop of Sioux City and ordained there as a bishop in October 1997. As his episcopal motto he adopted: "Ave Crux Spes Unica," meaning "Hail the Cross, Our Only Hope." He succeeded retiring Bishop Lawrence D. Soens as head of the diocese in November 1998.

The Galveston-Houston Archdiocese covers over 8,880 square miles and has over 2 million Catholics out of a total population of 7.1 million.