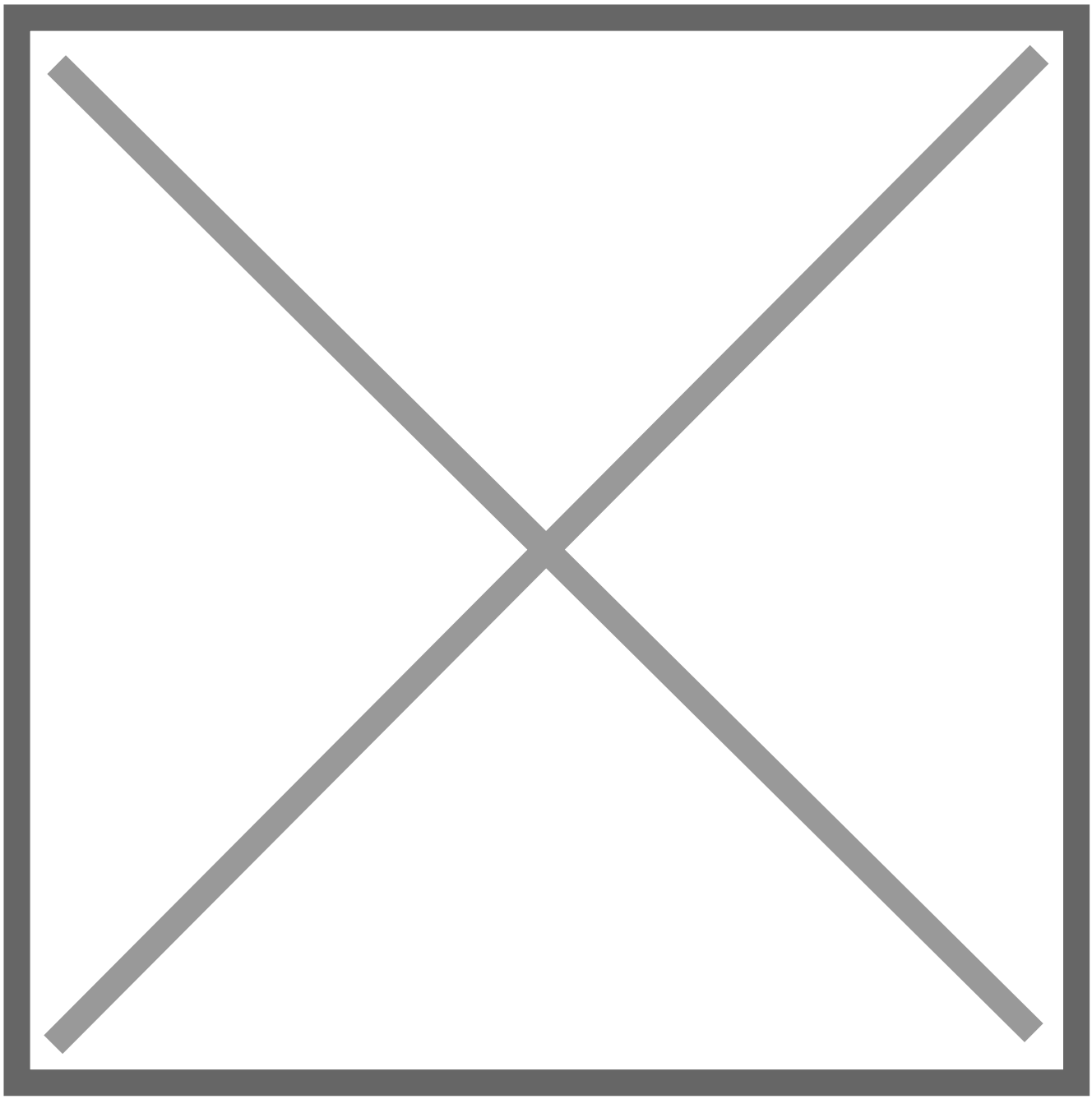
News



New York Auxiliary Bishop John S. Bonnici blesses the congregation during his episcopal ordination March 1, 2022, at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City. It was announced Jan. 7, 2026, that Pope Leo XIV has accepted the resignation of Bishop Salvatore Matano of Rochester and named Bishop Bonnici as his successor. (OSV News/Gregory Shemitz)



by OSV News

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Rochester, N.Y. — January 7, 2026
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Pope Leo XIV has accepted the resignation of Bishop Salvatore Matano of Rochester and named as his successor Bishop John Bonnici, currently auxiliary bishop of New York.

The resignation and appointment were announced by the Vatican and publicized in Washington, on Jan. 7, 2026, by Cardinal Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States.

Matano, ordained a priest of Providence, Rhode Island, has headed the Rochester diocese since his appointment in November 2013. Prior to that he served as head of Burlington, Vermont, where he was ordained a bishop on April 19, 2005.

On Sept. 15, 2021, he turned 75, the age at which canon law requires bishops to submit their resignation to the pope.

The appointment comes four months after the Diocese of Rochester's bankruptcy case was closed by a judge after nearly six years of proceedings. A $256.35 million settlement fund was established for abuse survivors.

In a written statement issued just after the plan was confirmed, Matano expressed his concern for abuse survivors, noting that "years of waiting (for resolution of the case) have added to the suffering and pain of those sexually abused and whose trust was betrayed."

"With profound sadness, I apologize to the survivors, the victims of such sinful and tragic acts for which they were not responsible. The Diocese has accepted responsibility for the damage caused by abuse," the bishop continued. "I ardently pray that this conclusion will bring to the survivors, and to our Diocesan family, peace, healing tranquility, and, please God, a renewed restoration of faith in Jesus Christ, who never abandons us, especially in our darkest hours, and heals hurts where humanity fails."

In 2019, Catholic News Agency reported that it was at the request of Matano that the beatification of Archbishop Fulton Sheen, scheduled for December 2019, had been delayed out of concern that Sheen might be cited in reports on clergy abuse in the state. In December 2024, Msgr. Jason Gray, executive director of the Archbishop Fulton John Sheen Foundation, told OSV News that "Sheen is clean. … Not one accusation has been raised that impugned Sheen."

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Bonnici, 60, was born Feb. 17, 1965, in New York to John Bonnici and Gertrude Rilling. A graduate of St. John's University in 1987, he earned a doctorate in sacred theology from the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family in Washington, D.C., in 1995.

Bonnici was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of New York on June 22, 1991, by Cardinal John O'Connor, with now-Cardinal Timothy Dolan serving as his principal consecrator. He taught at St. Joseph's Seminary in Dunwoodie, New York, from 1994-2013, and served as head of the Family Life/Respect Life Office for the Archdiocese of New York from 1996-2002. He also served as chair of the New York State Pro-Life Coordinators Conference and as a member of the New York State Catholic Conference's Public Policy committee.

He served as pastor of the Church of Philip Neri in the Bronx (2002-08), St. Columba in Chester (2008-2021), and Sts. John and Paul and St. Augustine in Larchmont (since 2021).

He was appointed an auxiliary bishop of New York by Pope Francis on Jan. 25, 2022 and was ordained at St. Patrick's Cathedral on March 1, 2022.

Bonnici serves on the board of Aid to the Church in Need, and he has written extensively on human sexuality, marriage and co-habitation. He co-authored "Partners in Life and Love: A Preparation Handbook for the Celebration of Catholic Marriage" (Alba House, 2002) with Joseph Giandurco, and "Person to Person: Friendship and Love in the Life of Hans Urs von Balthasar" (Alba House, 1999).