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Archbishop Gabriele G. Caccia, the Holy See's permanent observer to the United Nations, is p

Archbishop Gabriele G. Caccia, the Holy See's permanent observer to the United Nations, is pictured in a 2023 photo addressing the General Assembly at U.N. headquarters in New York City. Pope Leo XIV named Archbishop Caccia as the new papal nuncio to the United States March 7, 2026. He succeeds Cardinal Christophe Pierre, who turned 80 in January and had served in the post since 2016. (OSV News/Rick Bajornas, courtesy United Nations)



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Vatican City — March 7, 2026

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In one of his most highly-anticipated appointments, Pope Leo XIV has chosen the Vatican's representative to the United Nations to be his man in Washington, a decision that will shape both the direction of the U.S. Catholic hierarchy and the Vatican's relationship with the Trump administration.

The Vatican announced March 7 that the pope has chosen 68-year-old Italian Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, permanent observer of the Holy See to the U.N. in New

York since 2019, to succeed Cardinal Christophe Pierre as apostolic nuncio to the United States.

The nomination is one of the highest-profile personnel decisions of Leo's pontificate so far given the central role of nuncios in recommending bishop appointments to the Vatican.

After [expressing concern](#) over what he called the "weakness of multilateralism," Leo's decision to send the Vatican's U.N. envoy to Washington sends a strong signal about his desire to revive diplomacy at a time when the United States has increasingly turned inward.

As representative to the U.N., the nuncio-designate has a track record as one of the Vatican's fiercest advocates for multilateralism on the global stage. He has repeatedly [called](#) for nations to prioritize negotiation rather than resort to military solutions and has upheld the role of the U.N. as a valid and necessary instrument for peace.

In his U.N. interventions, Caccia has consistently toed the Holy See's diplomatic line on [nuclear disarmament](#), [poverty eradication](#), [care for the environment](#) and [migration](#).

A veteran diplomat, the archbishop previously served in significant posts as nuncio to Lebanon and the Philippines, both countries with a significant Catholic presence in geopolitically sensitive areas.

With a U.S. flag in the background, Pope Leo XIV waves to the crowd from the popemobile as

With a U.S. flag in the background, Pope Leo XIV waves to the crowd from the popemobile as he rides around St. Peter's Square at the Vatican before his weekly general audience Aug. 6, 2025. (CNS/Vatican Media)

Caccia is also familiar with the inner workings of the Vatican bureaucratic machinery, which serves as an asset in bridging Washington with Rome. The archbishop served as "assessor" for general affairs in the Vatican Secretariat of State from 2002-2009, a position akin to a president's deputy chief of staff.

During that time he worked alongside then-Archbishop Pietro Parolin, now the Vatican secretary of state, who served as deputy in the secretariat's section

responsible for relations with states.

Caccia benefits from Pierre's decade-long tenure, which calmed the waters following the turbulence of his predecessor's time in office.

When Pierre, who turned 80 in January, took the reins in Washington in 2016, he succeeded disgraced former [Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò](#), who [politicized](#) the office and left a lasting conservative imprint on the U.S. Catholic hierarchy.

Despite Pope Francis' desire to avoid the culture war debates during his 2015 visit to the United States, Viganò arranged for a private [meeting](#) between the pope with Kim Davis, a Kentucky county clerk who became a far-right icon for refusing to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples due to her Christian beliefs. Francis was [reportedly](#) "horrified" upon learning who Davis was and seeing the media storm that resulted from their meeting. He fired Viganò as a result.

The former nuncio later published a [highly-questionable](#) letter after his tenure as nuncio in 2018 alleging a widespread Vatican coverup of ex-Cardinal Theodore McCarrick's abuse of minors and seminarians and calling on Francis to resign. Viganò's continued public criticism of the pope and questioning of papal authority ultimately resulted in his [excommunication](#) in 2024.

Cardinal Christophe Pierre, papal nuncio to the United States, speaks during the ordination and

Cardinal Christophe Pierre, papal nuncio to the United States, speaks during the ordination and installation Mass of newly ordained Bishop James Misko as bishop of Tucson, Ariz., at St. Augustine Cathedral in Tucson Feb. 20. (OSV News/Brett Meister, courtesy Diocese of Phoenix)

Pierre inherited a U.S. hierarchy deeply divided over Francis' pastoral priorities, yet he gradually reshaped the episcopal landscape through a series of key appointments while also emerging as a visible voice of Rome in American Catholic debates about politics and public life.

In a resounding stamp of approval Pope Francis made Pierre a cardinal in 2023, an unusual move given that active apostolic nuncios are rarely elevated to the College of Cardinals.

With several major archdiocesan appointments recently filled — [New York](#), [Washington](#), [Boston](#) and [Denver](#), for example — coupled with the Vatican's [announcement](#) that the pope will not be visiting the United States in 2026, Caccia will arrive in Washington on relatively stable footing as he settles into the role.

But major nominations remain on the horizon, including in Chicago, where Cardinal Blase Cupich has passed the retirement age of 75, and Los Angeles, where Archbishop José Gomez will turn 75 in December.

Although his role at the United Nations did not involve recommending candidates for episcopal appointments, Caccia's more than six years in New York have familiarized him with the U.S. church landscape.

And that Leo is from the United States and previously led the Vatican office for selecting the world's bishops may suggest the pope himself will play a more active role in selecting U.S. bishops.

The Dicastery for Bishops also currently includes two American members, Cardinals Cupich and Joseph Tobin of Newark, whose input will be key in the selection of new bishops in the United States. The pope [renewed](#) their mandates in February.

Expectations remain that the first U.S.-born pontiff will eventually return to his homeland, particularly to his native Chicago.

If that happens, Caccia will be responsible for navigating the diplomatic and ecclesial choreography of what would likely become one of the most closely watched papal visits in modern American Catholic history.

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