News

Father Robert P. Boxie III, chaplain at the Sister Thea Bowman Catholic Student Center at How

Father Robert P. Boxie III, chaplain at the Sister Thea Bowman Catholic Student Center at Howard University in Washington, and Father Gary R. Studniewski, pastor of Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church in Washington, are pictured in undated photos. Both priests were appointed by Pope Leo XIV as auxiliary bishops for the Archdiocese of Washington May 1, 2026. (OSV News/Archdiocese of Washington)



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Pope Leo XIV has appointed two auxiliary bishops for the Archdiocese of Washington and accepted the resignation of Auxiliary Bishop Roy E. Campbell Jr. of Washington.

He has named as auxiliaries Father Gary R. Studniewski, who is pastor of the Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament in Washington, and Father Robert P. Boxie III, who is a chaplain at Howard University in Washington.

Campbell, 78, was appointed as auxiliary bishop for the Washington Archdiocese by Pope Francis on March 8, 2017.

The appointments and resignation were publicized in Washington May 1 by Cardinal Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States.

"It's a day of great joy for the Archdiocese of Washington," said Cardinal Robert W. McElroy at a May 1 press conference hosted by the archdiocese to announce the episcopal changes.

Studniewski has been pastor at the Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament since 2022. He is a former military chaplain (1995-2014) who retired with the rank of colonel.

Boxie has served as chaplain at the Sister Thea Bowman Catholic Student Center at Howard University since 2020. He also has been a professor in the Archdiocese of Washington's permanent diaconate program since 2018 and has been an assistant vocations director for the archdiocese since 2016.

McElroy noted Bishop-designate Studniewski's record of accomplishing "great things" in both "his civilian life in the military" and "also in service to the men and women of our armed services."

The cardinal said he had shown "true priestly, pastoral care, leadership skills, energy" and an "ability to speak about God" so as to "penetrate the hearts of the faithful."

He commended Boxie for his "gifts" of "outreach to youth, which is dear to his heart" and is "a great need we have in the archdiocese."

He also pointed to the incoming bishop's "ability to be a leader for the renewal and enhancement of the Black communities of our archdiocese, who are so important historically, now and for our future."

McElroy commended Campbell for his episcopal service, noting, "You left your life as a bank executive and followed the pathway of discipleship in the priesthood."

"I have always benefited from your wise counsel," said the cardinal.

He added that "the one who's missing here today" at the press conference was Auxiliary Bishop Evelio Menjivar-Ayala, who on May 1 was named as bishop of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, West Virginia, succeeding Bishop Mark E. Brennan.

"I know that God will have great things for him," said McElroy, adding, "We'll miss him a lot. His passion, his care, especially for the poor and marginalized, for the immigrant communities – these are wonderful, wonderful gifts that we will miss."

Studniewski and Boxie were visibly moved when speaking at the press conference.

"I just want to speak from the heart," said Studniewski, noting, "I fell in love with the Church of Washington in 1987" while "posted here as a military officer."

Ordained as a priest in 1995, he dedicated some 18 years to being a military chaplain, retiring from the U.S. Army in 2016 – and eager to return to the archdiocese, he said.

"I longed for the day when I could return," he said, noting as well in his remarks the archdiocese's "diverse population of folks that were so united in Christ."

Displaying his priestly ordination card, he read aloud the Scripture verse inscribed on the back, 2 Cor 12:9: "My grace is enough for you."

"That will be my episcopal motto," he said.

Boxie also teared up during the press conference, while joking that his father, who "gave me the gift of tears," had "also made me a Cowboys fan."

"So to all of my Commanders fans – I'll keep you in prayer," he quipped.

Like the cardinal, he thanked Campbell – under whom he had served as a parochial vicar at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Largo, Maryland – for his legacy of service.

"It's a great honor to follow you as an auxiliary bishop," he said.

Boxie stressed that "this appointment represents something bigger than me, much bigger than me."

"It's an acknowledgment of the community that I come from, the community that has formed me in the faith, especially my family, my own parish," he said. "It recognizes the community that I serve now, especially the students and young people at Howard University" – a historically Black research university founded in 1867 – "and the parishioners at Immaculate Conception in D.C."

"I sent a message to our community at Howard: 'You made your chaplain a bishop,'" he said, adding, "And Holy Mother Church thanks you."

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