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Pope appoints 35 clergy members, including Dolan, as synod members

by Cindy Wooden by Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY -- Pope Benedict XVI has appointed Los Angeles Archbishop Jose H. Gomez and 35 other cardinals, bishops and priests to serve as full members of the Synod of Bishops.

The papal appointees, whose names were announced Tuesday, will join more than 200 other synod members who were elected by their national bishops' conference, serve as the head of a Vatican office or were elected by the Union of Superiors General, the organization for the heads of men's religious orders.

The synod is scheduled for Oct. 7-28 at the Vatican to explore the theme, "New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith."

Twelve cardinals, including Australian Cardinal George Pell of Sydney, and diocesan bishops from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe also were named synod members by the pope.

The prelate of Opus Dei, Bishop Javier Echevarria Rodriguez, and the president of the Communion and Liberation movement, Fr. Julian Carron, were among the papal appointees, as were the superiors general of three religious orders of men: the Camillians, the Schonstatt Fathers and the Carmelites.

According to Vatican rules, only priests, bishops and cardinals can serve as full voting members of the synod, but the popes always have appointed laymen and laywomen to be among the synod's experts and auditors. That list is expected to be published shortly.

U.S. Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl of Washington was appointed by Pope Benedict to serve as the synod's recording secretary, a key role that involves presenting a broad overview of the topics to be discussed and then summarizing hundreds of speeches by synod members in preparation for the synod's work in small

groups to develop proposals and recommendations for Pope Benedict.

The synod members elected by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops are: Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York; Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Ky.; and Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller of San Antonio. Bishop Gerald F. Kicanas of Tucson, Ariz., originally elected as an alternate, also will participate instead of Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago, who is undergoing chemotherapy treatment.

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