

Cardinal ordains U.S. archbishop, two others for diplomatic service

Cindy Wooden Catholic News Service | Apr. 29, 2013
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With ambassadors from around the world in attendance, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone ordained as archbishops three members of the Vatican diplomatic corps -- including U.S. Archbishop Michael Banach -- who will serve as nuncios.

Banach, 50, a priest of the diocese of Worcester, Mass., was named nuncio to Papua New Guinea; he had been the Vatican's representative to several international agencies based in Vienna.

The others ordained Saturday were: Italian Archbishop Ettore Balestrero, 46, former Vatican undersecretary for relations with states, who was named nuncio to Colombia; and 48-year-old Archbishop Brian Udaigwe, who was born in Cameroon but ordained for the diocese of Orlu, Nigeria. He will serve as nuncio to Benin.

Pope Francis offered his congratulations to three new archbishops Monday during a meeting with them and members of their families.

Bertone, Vatican secretary of state, presided over the ordinations during a Mass at the main altar in St. Peter's Basilica.

In his homily, he spoke about the role of a bishop and about Jesus' commandment to his disciples to love one another as he loved them.

Loving like Jesus did, the cardinal said, means loving others to the point of offering up one's life if necessary.

"Offering one's life means giving oneself in full availability, placing the gifts you have received from God at the service of others, giving others your time, giving your lives without reservation," the cardinal said. "We find it easy sometimes to give things, but it's much more difficult, important and fruitful to give our time, moved by a missionary spirit."

While the nuncio's job is to promote the spiritual good of a nation's people by maintaining cordial relationships with civil authorities and supporting the local bishops, Bertone said, they also need to exercise the fullness of their priesthood by "going out to meet those searching for truth; lighting a lamp in the hearts of those walking in darkness; sowing peace, joy and hope in those suffering from solitude, distress and injustice."