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Pope appoints Brooklyn auxiliary bishop to head diocese of Bridgeport

by Catholic News Service

Washington — Pope Francis has appointed Auxiliary Bishop Frank Caggiano of Brooklyn, N.Y., as the fifth bishop of the diocese of Bridgeport, Conn.

The appointment was announced Wednesday in Washington by Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano, apostolic nuncio to the United States.

Caggiano, 54, succeeds then-Bishop William Lori of Baltimore, who was named archbishop of Baltimore in March 2012.

Msgr. Jerald Doyle has been as administrator of the diocese since May 2012 and he will continue to serve in the post until Caggiano is installed.

No date has been announced for the installation.

"The Diocese of Bridgeport welcomes the news of Bishop Caggiano's appointment. The Holy Father has blessed us with a priest, pastor and teacher with extensive experience at every level of diocesan ministries," Doyle said in a statement.

"Most importantly, he is a man of deep faith, love for the church and commitment to the Gospel. On behalf of the clergy, religious and laity, we welcome him with open arms and with our prayers that God will bless him as the shepherd of our diocese," the priest said.

Brooklyn Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio said that "first and foremost, Bishop Caggiano is an outstanding teacher, as is evidenced by the Holy See selecting him twice to offer catechesis to the young people at

World Youth Days both in Madrid 2011 and just recently in Rio de Janeiro."

"For 26 years, Bishop Caggiano has faithfully served the faithful of Brooklyn and Queens, and I can attest that he is an outstanding priest. He has been one of my closest collaborators," he said.

"I can unequivocally state that he will be an outstanding pastor to the faithful of Bridgeport," DiMarzio added.

Lori, who headed the Bridgeport diocese for 11 years, called Caggiano "a gifted teacher of the faith, whose evident love for the Lord Jesus Christ and his church will certainly further the work of the new evangelization in that diocese, which remains so close to my heart."

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"I offer my full support to Bishop Caggiano, and my prayers for him, just as I remember daily in my Masses and prayers the many good priests, religious and laity of the diocese I had the privilege of serving," he added.

Ordained a priest in 1987 for the diocese of Brooklyn, Caggiano has served in a number of pastoral and administrative positions. He has been both a pastor and also responsible for the formation of men for the permanent diaconate. In 2006, Caggiano was named an auxiliary bishop for Brooklyn and since then has served as vicar general and moderator of the Curia.

In his statement, DiMarzio said during his years serving the Brooklyn diocese, Caggiano was "at the forefront" of reorganizing Catholic schools and academies "to make them sustainable for many years into the future." Also, under his guidance, "all of our parishes were placed on firm financial footing to ensure their vibrancy for many years to come," he added.

Caggiano was born in Brooklyn March 29, 1959. He holds a bachelor of arts degree in philosophy from Cathedral College in Queens; a master of divinity from Immaculate Conception Seminary, Huntington, N.Y.; and a licentiate and doctorate in theology from Rome's Pontifical Gregorian University.

The Bridgeport diocese covers a 633-square-mile area. Out of a total population of about 926,000, close to 411,000 people, or 44 percent, are Catholic.

Jesuit Father Jeffrey von Arx, president of Fairfield University, congratulated Caggiano on his appointment, welcoming him to the diocese.

He called it "a particularly auspicious announcement for our Jesuit university on this day -- July 31st -- the feast day of St. Ignatius, the founder of the Society of Jesus."

He noted the bishop's Jesuit education, as a graduate of Regis High School in New York and the Jesuit-founded Pontifical Gregorian University.

"He brings to our diocese a reputation for great warmth, love of the church, strength of leadership, and pastoral compassion," von Arx said. "His experience as the auxiliary bishop in Brooklyn makes him ideally suited to lead our diverse and vibrant diocese."

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