



Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston

Director of Communications

MEDIA RELEASE

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Pope names Galveston-Houston bishop as head of Austin diocese

Auxiliary Bishop Joe S. Vasquez to shepherd 450,000 Catholics of Central Texas

HOUSTON – Pope Benedict XVI has appointed Auxiliary Bishop Joe S. Vasquez of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston to be the fifth Bishop of Austin.

The Holy Father's decision was announced this morning by the Vatican. Bishop Vasquez will be installed as the Bishop of Austin on March 8.

Bishop Vasquez, 52, has been an Auxiliary Bishop of Galveston-Houston for the last eight years.

He was ordained a priest for the Diocese of San Angelo in 1984. On Jan. 23, 2002, he became the nation's youngest active bishop when he was ordained an auxiliary bishop for Galveston-Houston at age 44.

"The people of this Archdiocese have been my brothers and sisters in faith these last eight years, and I am humbled by and grateful for the privilege to have served you," Bishop Vasquez said.

"I wish to thank Pope Benedict XVI for the confidence he has placed in me in naming me shepherd of the Diocese of Austin," he said. "I also offer prayers of gratitude this day for Daniel Cardinal DiNardo, Archbishop Emeritus Joseph A. Fiorenza and the priests, religious and laity of the Archdiocese for forming me as a bishop. Most of all, I give thanks to God for the gift of priesthood, which has brought me such joy for 25 years. I trust in the Holy Spirit to enlighten me for this next step in my journey."

Since 2006, Bishop Vasquez has been the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston's Vicar General/Chancellor, overseeing the administrative operations of the largest diocese in Texas and the 11th largest diocese in the United States. He has also served as Episcopal Vicar for Hispanics and been the Archdiocesan Liaison for Youth during his years in Galveston-Houston.

Bishop Vasquez will succeed Archbishop Gregory Aymond, who left the Diocese of Austin in June 2009 to be installed as the Archbishop of New Orleans. Monsignor Michael Mulvey, who was named Bishop-elect of Corpus Christi on Jan. 18, has been serving as temporary administrator of the Austin diocese until its new bishop could be installed.

Joe Steve Vasquez was born in 1957 in Stamford, Texas, just north of Abilene. The oldest child of Elvira and Juan Vasquez' four sons and two daughters, he was educated in public schools in Stamford and Abilene before attending the University of St. Thomas in Houston.

He earned a Bachelor's in Theology at UST in 1980, and studied at St. Mary's Seminary in Houston while working toward his undergraduate degree. In 1985, he earned a Licentiate in Theology from the Gregorian University in Rome.

Bishop Vasquez served as parochial vicar and pastor at parishes in Odessa, Fort Stockton and San Angelo and was Pro-Life Director of the San Angelo diocese before being appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Galveston-Houston.

His Mass of Installation will be in Austin on March 8.