

... president Bush's state of Texas is rewarded for his faithful service to the vaticanites.

Pope Names 23 Cardinals; 1st For Texas



US Archbishop Daniel N. DiNardo, left, laughs at a humorous remarks made by Archbishop Joseph A. Fiorenza, right, during the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston press conference announcing the resignation of Archbishop Joseph A. Fiorenza in this Tuesday, Feb. 28, 2006, file photo in Houston. DiNardo is one of the 23 new cardinals the pontiff will elevate in a solemn ceremony next Nov. 24. The pope named Wednesday, Oct. 17, 2007, 23 new cardinals, tapping the Chaldean patriarch of Baghdad, two Americans and archbishops from four continents to join the elite ranks of the 'princes' of the Roman Catholic Church. Eighteen of the 23 are under age 80 and thus eligible to vote in a conclave to elect a future pontiff.

(AP Photo/Houston Chronicle, Melissa Phillip)

By NICOLE WINFIELD, Associated Press Writer

Pope Benedict XVI named 23 new cardinals Wednesday, giving Texas its first "prince" of the Roman Catholic Church in a clear recognition of the growing Latino presence in the U.S. church.

The appointment of Archbishop Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston brings the number of American cardinals to 17 — second only to Italy — and increases the American contingent's clout in any conclave to elect a future pontiff.

Benedict tapped Vatican officials, academics, diplomats and archbishops from five continents. Eighteen of the new cardinals are under age 80 and eligible to vote in a conclave; five others, including the patriarch of Baghdad, were named in recognition of

their service to the church.

Benedict said he would give them all their red hats at a Vatican ceremony Nov. 24.

The naming of DiNardo, 58, of Galveston-Houston was something of a surprise since there are several other U.S. archdioceses which usually have cardinals leading them, including Washington and Baltimore, but the pope did not elevate their archbishops.

However, the Rev. Robert Wister, professor of church history at Seton Hall University, said just because a diocese has had a cardinal doesn't mean it will always have a cardinal. He said he wasn't at all surprised by DiNardo's appointment.

"This is a very clear recognition of the growth and importance of the Latino population in the Catholic Church in the United States, and in particular it's a recognition of the Mexican-American presence in the church, of which there is a very large number in the archdiocese of Galveston-Houston," he said by telephone.

The Rev. James Martin of the Jesuit magazine "America" concurred.

"It's hugely significant in terms of the Vatican recognizing the center of gravity for American Catholicism is moving south," he said.

DiNardo accepted congratulatory phone calls from priests in his parish and Catholic leaders across Texas.

"It says something about Texas and how wonderful Texas is in the terms of the growth of our Catholic faith," he told a news conference in Houston.

Wister noted that the growth in the Texas region prompted the Vatican to elevate Galveston-Houston into an archdiocese in 2004 — making Texas one of the few U.S. states that have two archdioceses; its other one is San Antonio.

Wister predicted that Miami would be next up for a cardinal.

The other American appointed Wednesday was Archbishop John Foley, a longtime Vatican official who was recently named grand master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem, a lay religious community that aims to protect the rights of the Roman Catholic Church in the Holy Land.

With 13 voting-age cardinals, the U.S. now has the second-largest voting bloc in the College of Cardinals. But Wister said he doesn't think there will be an "American" vote

in a future conclave.

"Americans don't tend to be nationalistic, in particular in the College of Cardinals, and they're very different people," he noted.

In addition to the Americans, Benedict named the archbishops of Paris; Mumbai, India; Nairobi, Kenya; Valencia, Spain; Barcelona, Spain; Monterrey, Mexico; Dakar, Senegal, and Sao Paulo, Brazil, the primate of Ireland, as well as a handful of Italians.

Several Vatican officials were named, including German Monsignor Josef Cordes, who heads the Vatican's charitable works as president of the Pontifical Council "Cor Unum;" Polish Archbishop Stanislaw Rylko, president of the Pontifical Council for Laity; Italian Archbishop Giovanni Lajolo, former Vatican foreign minister and current governor of Vatican City; and Argentine Archbishop Leonardo Sandri, prefect of the Vatican's Congregation for Eastern Churches.

Sandri was for several years the "voice" of Pope John Paul II, stepping in to deliver his speeches when the ailing pontiff was unable to finish them.

Benedict also named five prelates over age 80 who he said deserved particular merit, including the Chaldean patriarch of Baghdad, Emmanuel III Delly.

Delly has been outspoken about the need to protect minority Christians from Iraq's spiraling violence — a concern voiced repeatedly by Benedict in recent months.

Benedict said he also wanted to name the elderly bishop of Koszalin-Kolobrzeg, Poland, Bishop Ignacy Jez, but he died suddenly on Tuesday on the eve of the announcement.

"We offer our prayers to him," Benedict said.

Wednesday marked the second time Benedict has named new cardinals. His first consistory was held in March 2006, and he said Wednesday he hoped to name more in the future.

"There are other people who are very dear to me who, because of their dedication in the service of the church, surely warrant being elevated to the dignity of a cardinal," Benedict said.

Cardinals have been the sole electors of the pontiff for nearly 1,000 years and it remains their most important job. For centuries, they have chosen the pope from their own ranks, as they did on April 19, 2005, when they tapped Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger to be the next pope.

Following the Nov. 24 conclave, there will be a total of 202 cardinals; Of them, 121 will be of voting age, one over the limit set by Pope Paul VI

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