

Strictly EMBARGOED

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Pope Names Bishop Perez as Bishop of the Diocese of Cleveland

Pope Francis has named Bishop Nelson J. Perez, Auxiliary Bishop of Rockville Centre, N.Y., as Bishop of the Diocese of Cleveland, Ohio.

The appointment was publicized this morning in Washington, July 11, by Archbishop Christophe Pierre, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States.

Bishop-designate Perez was born in Miami, Florida, on June 16, 1961 to David and Emma Perez. Bishop Perez earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology from Montclair State University in 1983. He taught at Colegio la Piedad, a Catholic elementary school in Puerto Rico prior to entering Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary in Philadelphia, where he earned Master of Divinity and Master of Arts in Theology degrees in 1988 and 1989, respectively. He was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia in 1989. In 1998, he was named a chaplain to His Holiness by Pope John Paul II and Prelate of Honor in 2009 by Pope Benedict XVI.

In June 2012, Bishop Perez was named Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Rockville Centre and received Episcopal Ordination on July 25, 2012.

Bishop-designate Perez served as the Episcopal Vicar for the Eastern Vicariate of the Diocese of Rockville Centre and Vicar for Hispanic Ministry for the Diocese of Rockville Centre. While in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, Bishop Perez served as pastor of St. William Church in Philadelphia and as pastor of St. Agnes, West Chester, Pennsylvania. He was the founding director of the Catholic Institute for Evangelization, an Archdiocesan center for Adult Faith Formation Development and Lay Ministry Training. In addition, Bishop Perez served as parochial vicar of St. Ambrose in Philadelphia and assistant director of the Office for Hispanic Catholics. He taught courses in religion and psychology as an adjunct faculty member at La Salle University, and has traveled within the United States offering conferences on evangelization, lay ministry, leadership development, retreats and parish days of recollection. While in the Diocese of Rockville Centre, Bishop Perez was a member of the Corporate Board of Directors for Catholic Health Services; Vice Chair of Catholic Charities; Priests Personnel Board, the Presbyteral Council and the Diocesan Advisory Committee for Hispanic Ministry of the Diocese of Rockville Centre.

As a member of the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, Bishop Perez serves as the Chair of the Bishop's Sub-Committee for Hispanic Affairs and is a former member of the Bishop's Sub-Committee for the Campaign for Human Development.

Bishop-designate Perez will be installed as the 11th bishop of the Diocese of Cleveland at a Solemn Mass on Tuesday, September 5, 2017 at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist in downtown Cleveland. Evening Prayer will be celebrated on September 4.

“I am so very happy to be here with you, to learn from you, grow with you, and serve you with pastoral devotion,” said Bishop-designate Perez. “Please don’t hesitate to say hello, if you see me as I venture out, eager to experience my new home. God bless you, all!”

Until Bishop-designate Perez’s installation as Bishop of Cleveland, Bishop Daniel E. Thomas will continue leading the diocese as its Apostolic Administrator. Bishop Thomas is the bishop of the Diocese of Toledo, Ohio. He assumed leadership duties for the Diocese of Cleveland upon the retirement of Bishop Richard Lennon, who was granted early retirement on December 28, 2016 due to health concerns.

“In Bishop Nelson Perez, the Diocese of Cleveland is receiving a faithful, enthusiastic and joyful shepherd for Christ and His Church,” remarked Bishop Thomas. “With his warm personality, Bishop Perez will endear himself to all who meet him. Bishop Perez will find in Cleveland a true spiritual home filled with dedicated and devoted people, a family of faith that I am grateful to have had the privilege to serve. I personally look forward to working with Bishop Perez in announcing the Gospel in Northern Ohio.”

The Diocese of Cleveland comprises 3,414 square miles that include eight counties in northeast Ohio. It has a total population of 2,774,113 people of which 677,219 or 24 percent are Catholic.