

Pope names new archbishop for Miami, new bishop for Springfield

WASHINGTON - Pope Benedict XVI has named Bishop Thomas G. Wenski of Orlando, Fla., 59, as archbishop of Miami and accepted the resignation of Archbishop John C. Favalora, 74, who has headed the archdiocese since 1994.

The pope also named Chicago Auxiliary Bishop Thomas J. Paprocki, 57, as bishop of Springfield, Ill.

The changes were announced April 20 in Washington by Archbishop Pietro Sambi, papal nuncio to the United States.

Archbishop Wenski will be installed June 1. Bishop Paprocki will be installed June 22.

In Miami, Archbishop Favalora said south Florida welcomes "this native son of ours," who "has served us well in the past as our pastor."

Archbishop Wenski, who was born in West Palm Beach, Fla., "knows us well and he is no stranger to us," the retiring archbishop said in a statement.

"His many pastoral gifts suit him exceptionally well to be our chief shepherd. His extensive understanding of and experience with Central and South America and the Caribbean Island nations will enhance the international relationships we already enjoy," he said of his successor. "His linguistic skills enable him to communicate well with our neighboring nations and churches."

Archbishop Wenski said he was "deeply grateful to the clergy, religious and faithful of the Diocese of Orlando." In Miami, he said, "I have big shoes to fill," but added that he knows the Miami Archdiocese will make him "feel at home again" as he reacquaints himself with the church in south Florida.

"Humbled by the Holy Father's confidence in me and aware of my own limitations and shortcomings, I once again ask the intercession of Mary, mother of the church,

that I may worthily fulfill my new duties.”

In Springfield, Bishop Paprocki succeeds now-Archbishop George J. Lucas, who in July 2009 was installed as archbishop of Omaha, Neb. Monsignor Carl A. Kemme has been diocesan administrator in the interim.

Quoting Abraham Lincoln, whom he called a hero since he first visited Springfield is as an eighth-grader, Bishop Paprocki said it is a “fundamental blessing” to be inheriting, as their new shepherd, “the flock that comprises the Catholic community in central Illinois.”

He pledged to do his best to build on the ministry of his predecessor and said he looked forward to working with all the clergy, women religious and the laity “and all people of good will in our state capital to carry out the mission entrusted to us by Jesus Christ to proclaim the Gospel.”

He expressed gratitude to the Chicago Archdiocese – his home archdiocese – and its archbishop, Cardinal Francis E. George.

In welcoming Springfield’s new bishop, Monsignor Kemme said: “May your service here in our diocese bear much fruit and bring you great joy.”

Born Oct. 18, 1950, Thomas G. Wenski attended St. Vincent de Paul Seminary in Boynton Beach, Fla., and was ordained a priest of the Miami Archdiocese in 1976. He was appointed auxiliary bishop of Miami in 1997 and bishop of Orlando in 2003.

Archbishop Wenski has a master’s degree in sociology from Fordham University and has served as chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Migration and as chairman of the board of directors of the Catholic Legal Immigration Network Inc. He also has served as chairman of the bishops’ Committee on International Justice and Peace and a member of the Task Force on Cultural Diversity in the Church.

Archbishop Favalora, a native of New Orleans, was named archbishop of Miami in 1994. Before that, he was bishop of Alexandria, La., 1986-89, and bishop of St. Petersburg, Fla., 1989-94.

The Miami Archdiocese covers a 5,000-square-mile area. Out of a total population of

about 4.3 million, Catholics number 736,089, or 17 percent.

Thomas J. Paprocki was born in Chicago Aug. 5, 1952, and studied for the priesthood at Quigley Preparatory Seminary in Chicago and St. Mary of the Lake Seminary in Mundelein, Ill., where he earned a licentiate in theology. He was ordained a priest in 1978. He holds a civil law degree from De Paul University College of Law, Chicago, and a canon law from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome.

He was named an auxiliary bishop of Chicago in 2003. He has served on the bishops' Committee on Canonical Affairs and Church Governance and the Task Force on Health Care.

The Springfield Diocese covers about 15,000 square miles. Out of a total population of about 1.1 million, Catholics number 161,206.