

We have a new Archbishop. What does that mean?

It has been an eventful week. You woke up Monday morning to learn that Pope Francis accepted the resignations of Archbishop John Nienstedt and Auxiliary Bishop Lee Piché. At the same time, our Holy Father named Coadjutor Archbishop Bernard Hebda, of Newark, New Jersey, our Apostolic Administrator.

What is an Apostolic Administrator? An Apostolic Administrator essentially oversees the Archdiocese until a new Archbishop is chosen. Archbishop Hebda will work very closely with Bishop Andrew Cozzens and the rest of the Chancery and Archdiocesan staff in the meantime to make sure the Church continues to meet the needs of the faithful and the thousands who count on her.

How much will Archbishop Hebda be here in the Twin Cities? Archbishop Hebda told The Catholic Spirit he's not sure how much time he'll spend here, but he expects to devote most of his efforts to the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis.

How long will it take for Pope Francis to name a new Archbishop? There is no timeline or deadline for a new Archbishop, but Archbishop Hebda says he plans on being here for some months.

Could Archbishop Hebda be named our Archbishop? It is possible, but as of right now, as Coadjutor of Newark, he is scheduled to succeed Archbishop Myers when he reaches retirement age.

How will not having a permanent Archbishop affect our parish or school? There should not be any effect on our parish or school. Parishes are separate corporations under Minnesota law and have separate governing bodies. It is possible, however, that there may be some delay in matters that require approval from the Archdiocese, or the Apostolic Administrator may decide to defer some decisions to the new Archbishop.

Will the resignations affect the Chapter 11 Reorganization of the Archdiocese? Bankruptcy attorneys for the Archdiocese say the resignations should not affect efforts now underway to compensate abuse victims.

How will the resignations affect the criminal and civil charges served upon the Archdiocese two weeks ago? The Ramsey County Attorney stated they will not affect the case and Bishop Cozzens has reaffirmed the Archdiocese's commitment to working with John Choi and investigators from the St. Paul Police Department.

When will all of these legal troubles be over? It is hard to say what the future will bring, but we have committed priests and lay leaders to guide us through these times and the Eucharist to strengthen us. We are confident God will be with us.

For Archbishop Hebda's complete interview and more information, you can read more at www.TheCatholicSpirit.com.

Letter from Archbishop Bernard Hebda

Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I am humbled by Pope Francis' decision to appoint me to serve as Apostolic Administrator for the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. I am grateful for his confidence and I look forward to working with Auxiliary Bishop Andrew Cozzens and the leadership of the Archdiocese. I pray that I will be able to be of some service to you, the priests and faithful of the Archdiocese, as you prepare for the appointment of a new Archbishop.

Fondly recalling my years as a Bishop in Northern Michigan, where I first came to know the vibrancy of the faith shared by Catholics of the upper Midwest, I am hopeful that there will be opportunities to meet many of you in the weeks ahead. Mindful of Pope Francis' challenge to bishops to be true shepherds who walk in the midst of the flock to the point of developing "ears open to listening to the voice of the sheep entrusted to their care", it is my intention to be as available as possible, while still fulfilling my responsibilities as the Coadjutor Archbishop of Newark. As the Universal Church prepares to embark on a Year of Mercy, I look forward to getting to know this local Church and experiencing in a new context the marvelous ways in which the Lord works through His people to make His grace and healing presence known and felt, even in the most challenging of times.

Our loving God frequently finds ways to remind us that even those who exercise leadership in the Church do so as laborers and not as the Master Builder: the Church is not ours but Christ's. While it is always true that we are merely stewards for a time in a vineyard that is not our own, the role of an Apostolic Administrator is particularly temporary. The law of the Church reminds us that an Administrator is not to introduce change, but rather to facilitate the smooth continuation of the ordinary and essential activities of the Church, while advancing those positive initiatives to which the Archdiocese is already committed. It is my hope that I might be able to be faithful to that vision so that whenever a new Archbishop is appointed, he will find in this local Church a vibrant community of missionary disciples that is growing in its knowledge of the love of Jesus and in its shared commitment to the Gospel.

For this to happen, I realize that I will need the prayers and support of you, the priests, deacons, religious, and laity of the Archdiocese. In this time of transition, please join me in asking for the intercession of Our Lady of Mercy. May she not only seek God's blessings for those who have given themselves to the service of this local Church in the past, but also draw us ever closer to the Heart of her Son so that we might more perfectly radiate His healing love in the days to come.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Rev. Bernard A. Hebda,

Apostolic Administrator, Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis