

Holy See Appoints Vietnamese-american Auxiliary Bishop for Diocese of Orange

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Florida Pastor Reverend Thanh Thai Nguyen will be elevated to Auxiliary Bishop of Orange – a central role in the spiritual care for America’s Largest Vietnamese Catholic Community **Garden Grove, Calif., (October 6, 2017)** – The Vatican Press Office today announced that Bishop-elect Thanh Thai Nguyen has been appointed by the Holy See as Auxiliary Bishop for the Diocese of Orange. Auxiliary Bishop-elect Nguyen will support Bishop Vann and auxiliary Bishop Timothy Freyer, ordained this past January, in caring for the spiritual needs of the 1.3 million member Diocese of Orange, one of the fastest growing and most ethnically diverse in the United States. His episcopal ordination will be announced in the coming days. “I am both humbled and honored to accept this appointment,” said Bishop-elect Thanh Thai Nguyen. “I am grateful to Pope Francis and to Bishop Vann for their trust and confidence in me and I pray that I may live up to their expectations. My life continues to be blessed by the Grace of God and I look forward to joining with my new family of faith in the Diocese of Orange.” In his new role, Bishop-elect Nguyen will quickly pick up the mantle of leadership in support of Bishop Vann’s energetic ministry. He will provide important pastoral care and leadership within the Vietnamese Catholic community in Orange County, the largest congregation in the United States. Like his brother Bishops, Bishop-elect Nguyen will focus on shepherding the large and diverse community of faith toward an ever deeper relationship with Christ. “We are blessed as a Diocese to welcome such an experienced and passionate leader to journey with us in faith. Bishop-elect Nguyen is loved greatly by his current congregation and has a reputation as a humble, competent and caring leader. These traits will serve our Diocese well as our community continues its growth – both in size and faith,” said the Most Rev. Kevin Vann, Bishop of Orange. Bishop-elect Nguyen was born in Nha Trang, Vietnam in 1953 and is the second oldest of eight boys and three girls. He spent most of his elementary education in Catholic schools and in 1966 he entered St. Joseph Seminary, a small diocesan institute in Vietnam. His seminary formation was interrupted when the communist government took over the Country in 1975. Bishop-elect Nguyen and other seminarians were forced into hard labor in the rice fields to be allowed to continue their studies. In 1979 after suffering religious persecution, Bishop-elect Nguyen along with 26 members of his extended family boarded a small motorboat and slipped out of Cam Ranh Bay – headed for the Philippines and safety. The family was soon engulfed by a tropical storm and spent 18 days at sea, several with no food or water. The family prayed the Rosary together each morning and evening. All 26 of them, through the Grace of God, arrived safely in the Philippines. After 10 months in a refugee camp the family left Manila in June of 1980 for their new life in Beaumont, Texas. Upon arriving in the United States, Bishop-Elect Nguyen’s vocational calling continued to draw him toward God. He worked at Catholic Charities in Hartford, Connecticut before returning to his academics at Merrimack College in N. Andover, where he earned a Bachelor’s of Arts degree. After two years of study he graduated Cum Laude and immediately began his novitiate year in Washington D.C. and took his first vows with the La Salette Order in 1987. Bishop-Elect Nguyen graduated from the Weston Jesuit School of Theology, Cambridge, Massachusetts in May 1990 and was ordained on May 11, 1991. Bishop-Elect Nguyen was later incardinated into the Diocese of St. Augustine, Florida where he currently serves at St. Joseph parish, where he was appointed pastor in 2013. Bishop-elect Nguyen is well known by parishioners for his love of music and skill in playing the guitar. He is also an avid tennis player. Pastoral Center: Communications Department 13280 Chapman Avenue, Garden Grove, CA 92840 **office:** 714-282-3075 **fax:** 714-282-302
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