



THE ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIocese OF LAS CRUCES

1280 Med Park Drive • Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005-3239
575-523-7577 • Fax 575-524-3874 • www.rcdlc.org

MEDIA NOTICE

MAY 15, 2019

On May 15, 2019 Pope Francis announced the appointment of Bishop Peter Baldacchino, formerly Auxiliary Bishop of Miami as the third Bishop of the Diocese of Las Cruces (New Mexico).

Bishop Baldacchino was born in Malta on December 5, 1960, the second oldest of four children, one girl and three boys. His father, René, resides in Malta and his mother, Hilda, is deceased. Bishop enjoyed Catholic education in Malta. He completed intermediary school with a focus on chemistry and math in 1979. While working as technical manager at Malta's Canada Dry bottling plant, Bishop completed a diploma in science at the University of Malta.

The Lord surprised Bishop Baldacchino with a call to the priesthood discerned from a profound experience at age 28 when attending a World Youth Day gathering with Pope St. John Paul II. As Bishop Baldacchino expresses it, "I fell in love with the missionary spirit of the Church." Soon after, in October 1990, he was sent to the Redemptoris Mater Archdiocesan Missionary Seminary of Newark (NJ). During seminary Bishop earned a Master of Divinity degree from Seton Hall University. He was ordained a priest on May 25, 1996 for the Archdiocese of Newark in New Jersey.

After ordination to the priesthood he served for three years as parochial vicar at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish in Ridgewood, New Jersey. In 1999 Bishop Baldacchino was sent as a missionary to serve as Chancellor for the Roman Catholic Mission *Sui Iuris* Turks and Caicos Islands. Additionally, he became pastor of Our Lady of Divine Providence parish, on the island of Providenciales, where he built their new Church and Holy Family Academy, the only Catholic school in the country.

His episcopal motto is *Ubi Dominus, Ibidem Laetitia* (Where God is, there is joy) reflective of his desire to bring the joy of the Gospel to others. Evangelization – the preaching of the Gospel – is woven into all his ministry. As he notes, "Once faith is rediscovered, fruits start to grow. We have seen many fruits." This has been evident throughout his priestly ministry.

Bishop Baldacchino is approachable, warm and disarming, a man who works with his hands and was found vacuuming his own church in the Islands when he first received the call to become bishop. He is a man very much in the spirit of Pope Francis, present with his people and someone who accompanies them in their journey of faith.

Ordained bishop on the Solemnity of St Joseph, March 19, 2014, Bishop has served as an auxiliary bishop in Miami and pastor of St Kieran parish. He is a member of the boards of the three South Florida seminaries, of Catholic Health Services, the Archdiocese of Miami Finance Council, and chairs the Marriage and Family Committee for the Province of Florida, as well as several other Board assignments in addition to his role as auxiliary bishop.

He speaks his native Maltese, as well as English, the country's other official language and also speaks Italian, Spanish and some Creole.

Coming to the vast mission Diocese of Las Cruces, Bishop Baldacchino looks forward to using his many gifts to serve God's people and embraces this mission with open arms as the Diocese welcomes him. He shares, "The Lord will surprise us with His grace. He wants me to be part of the work He has begun



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among His people in this favored area. I look forward to the joy that the Lord has planned for us to encounter together.”

Bishop Baldacchino’s installation as the third Bishop of Las Cruces will take place on July 23, 2019.

Location and time for the event is pending.