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## **The Selection of Archbishop-Designate George J. Lucas Appointed June 3, 2009**

### **What does the announcement mean?**

The announcement by the Vatican means that Pope Benedict XVI has accepted the resignation of Archbishop Elden F. Curtiss as Archbishop of Omaha and appointed Archbishop-Designate George J. Lucas to be the next archbishop. He is the archbishop-designate until his installation ceremony on July 22, 2009 at 2 p.m. Archbishop Curtiss now holds the title “archbishop emeritus.”

### **How did Pope Benedict XVI choose the archbishop-designate?**

There is no set path to being appointed bishop or archbishop. There are a number of ways in which a candidate can be considered by the Holy Father. Every three years, the bishops within a province compile a secret list of possible successors. Individual bishops and archbishops are also free to submit the names of worthy candidates. The Papal Nuncio in Washington D.C., Archbishop Pietro Sambi, plays an important role in the process. Before forwarding recommendations to the Holy Father, the office may solicit additional names and opinions from a body of local priests called the College of Consultors in the local diocese. The laity within the archdiocese may also be consulted. After review and consultation with the president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), his office typically delivers the names of three suitable candidates to the Congregation of Bishops at the Vatican.

### **What happens in the next few weeks?**

Archbishop-Designate George J. Lucas will return to his home diocese of Springfield in Illinois to prepare for his move and to help begin a transition process there. He will act as administrator of his home diocese until he is installed as the Archbishop of Omaha. Curtiss will act as administrator of the Archdiocese of Omaha until the installation of Archbishop-Designate George J. Lucas.

### **What is the significance of the installation ceremony?**

Under canon law, the archbishop-designate officially takes possession of the Archdiocese of Omaha during the installation at St. Cecilia’s Cathedral on July 22, 2009. During the liturgy, he presents his apostolic letter of appointment from Pope Benedict XVI in the presence of invited guests, clergy, the College of Consultors and the chancellor of the archdiocese.

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**Why will the installation be held in the Cathedral?**

Since 1907, St. Cecilia's Cathedral has been the seat of the Archbishop of Omaha and the spiritual center of the archdiocese. It is fitting that the "mother church" of the archdiocese, offering a symbolic welcome to people of all faiths and cultures, be the setting for the installation.

**What happens when the archbishop-designate visits the pope?**

On June 29, 2009, the feasts of St. Peter and Paul, Archbishop-Designate George J. Lucas will go to Rome to seek a *pallium* from Pope Benedict XVI. The *pallia* are blessed by the pope and given to new archbishops in a special ceremony. This white woolen collar with six black crosses represents communion with Rome in his leadership of the Archdiocese of Omaha.

**What is the role of Archbishop Curtiss after the installation?**

As archbishop emeritus, Archbishop Curtiss plans an active retirement here in the Archdiocese of Omaha. He will support his successor and plans a continued pastoral role within the archdiocese. He looks forward to celebrating confirmations and hopes to spend time writing, giving retreats and offering spiritual direction.