



DIOCESE OF VENICE IN FLORIDA

Communications Department

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A New Shepherd for the Catholic Diocese of Venice

Most Rev. Emilio Biosca Agüero, O.F.M. Cap. replaces Bishop Frank J. Dewane as Bishop of the Diocese of Venice in Florida

Venice, Fla., July 6, 2026 – The Catholic Diocese of Venice in Florida will celebrate the Episcopal Ordination and Installation of His Excellency the Most Reverend Emilio Biosca Agüero, O.F.M. Cap. Saturday, July 11, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. at St. John XXIII Catholic Church in Fort Myers. Bishop Biosca, a Capuchin Franciscan priest, will be the third shepherd of the Diocese, following the Most Rev. Frank J. Dewane, now Bishop Emeritus, who retires after 20 years of faithful service as bishop (2007-2026) and Bishop John J. Nevins (1984-2007). After his ordination and installation, the new bishop assumes the leadership of an estimated 260,000 Catholics in Southwest Florida.

The Ordination Mass will be celebrated by His Excellency the Most Rev. Thomas Wenski, Metropolitan Archbishop of the Province of Miami (which includes the seven dioceses of the state of Florida), who will be the principal ordaining bishop, with His Eminence Seán Cardinal O'Malley O.F.M. Cap., Archbishop Emeritus of Boston and His Excellency the Most Rev. Frank J. Dewane, Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Venice in Florida, serving as co-consecrators. The Mass will be celebrated in the presence of The Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, His Excellency the Most Rev. Gabriele Giordano Caccia. Several guest bishops and priests, Franciscan priests of the Capuchin Province of St. Augustine, priests of the Diocese of Venice and many of the Diocese's deacons and seminarians will be in attendance, as well as local members of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, the Order of Malta, the Knights of Columbus and members of the lay faithful from each of the Diocese's 61 parishes.

An Episcopal Ordination is a historic and joyous moment in the life of a Diocese, and life-changing for the priest to be ordained as bishop. Episcopal Ordination is the sacramental rite that confers the fullness of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, elevating a priest to the episcopacy, the order of bishops, who share with the Pope the pastoral care for the entire Church. Pope Leo XIV appointed Bishop Biosca to the Diocese of Venice in Florida on May 13, 2026, when the Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Frank J. Dewane, who had submitted a request to retire at ages 75 as is required by canon law.

The rite establishes the bishop as an authentic successor to the original 12 Apostles, linking him in an unbroken line of spiritual authority originating from Jesus Christ, conferring the sacred authority to teach, sanctify, and govern. The ceremony involves the laying on of hands by other bishops, which is the visible sign of transmitting the Holy Spirit, the anointing of the head with sacred chrism, and the presentation of the Book of the Gospels and Episcopal Insignia.

The Episcopal Insignia consists of three items: The episcopal ring, which symbolizes a bishop's fidelity to the Church, the miter, which represents his commitment to the pursuit of holiness, and the crosier, a sign of his duty to guide and govern.

The Episcopal Insignia will be presented and blessed at Solemn Vespers, a prayer service the evening before the Ordination Mass, on Friday, July 10, at 5:00 p.m., also to be held at St. John XXIII Parish in Fort Myers. A traditional evening prayer service, Solemn Vespers is part of the Liturgy of the Hours, the Catholic Church's communal prayer that fulfills the Lord's command to "pray always" (Luke 18:1, 1 Thessalonians 5:17), and gives thanks for the day just past, making an evening sacrifice of praise to God (Psalm 141). The Most Rev. Frank J. Dewane will preside. Very Rev. Robert Marva, O.F.M. Cap., Provincial Minister of the Capuchin Franciscan Friars, Province of St. Augustine, will give the homily.

Both the Ordination Mass and Solemn Vespers will begin with prelude music 45 minutes prior. Music for the events is being provided by cantors and musicians from various parishes and groups from throughout the Diocese of Venice, including multi-cultural performances during the Evening Prayer prelude from Haitian, Spanish and Vietnamese choirs.

Although the Ordination Mass is by invitation only due to capacity constraints, Solemn Vespers on Friday evening is open to all, with no ticket required, until the Church and Chapel are at capacity. Both the Ordination Mass and Solemn Vespers will be livestreamed and all are encouraged to join in prayer virtually if unable to attend in person. The events will be livestreamed at dioceseofvenice.org/livestream and at facebook.com/dioceseofvenice.

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Media Advisory: Media are welcome to attend to cover both Solemn Vespers and the Ordination Mass, **however, all those covering must be on the Press List in advance.** Further, attending reporters must recognize the sacred and solemn nature of a Catholic Mass or Prayer Service and be discreet and respectful in manner and attire. If you wish to attend to cover the event(s), please contact Karen Barry Schwarz, Director of Communications for the Diocese of Venice in Florida by Friday noon, July 10, 2026: schwarz@dioceseofvenice.org, 941-441-1118 (office), 941-275-5183 (cell). Please provide name of media organization, name of media representative(s) covering, cell phone contact, and which event(s) you plan to cover. A press box will be available for broadcast media for audio access, and a separate parking area and entrance door for media will be available.

About the Diocese of Venice in Florida – The Diocese of Venice in Florida was established by Pope Saint John Paul in 1984 and today includes 61 parishes, 10 missions, 15 schools and serves an estimated 260,000 plus Catholics in 10 counties. Presently, the Most Rev. Frank J. Dewane is the Apostolic Administrator and Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese. The Most Reverend Emilio Biosca Agüero, O.F.M. Cap. will assume the leadership of the Diocese immediately following his Ordination and Installation on Saturday, July 11, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. For more information on the Diocese of Venice in Florida visit the Diocese’s website, at dioceseofvenice.org