

Pope names new auxiliary bishops for Santiago archdiocese

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Pope Francis named two auxiliary bishops for the Archdiocese of Santiago, Chile, following a request made by the apostolic administrator of the embattled archdiocese.

The Vatican announced May 22 that the pope named Father Carlos Irarrazaval Errazuriz and Salesian Father Alberto Lorenzelli Rossi as auxiliary bishops of the Santiago archdiocese.

The appointments were made just over a month after the pope met with Bishop Celestino Aos Braco of Copiapo, Chile, who was chosen to temporarily lead the archdiocese following the resignation of Cardinal Ricardo Ezzati in late March.

Although there already were six auxiliary bishops in Santiago, Bishop Aos told journalists April 8 that he asked the pope to name new auxiliary bishops who can help him with the governance of the archdiocese.

“The (auxiliary bishops) who are there are involved in other committees and tasks,” he explained. “That is why I find myself not only new there, but alone as well.”

In a statement released May 22, the archdiocese noted that four of the auxiliary bishops are serving as apostolic administrators of the dioceses of Rancagua, Talca, Valparaiso and Osorno.

The dioceses became vacant when Pope Francis accepted the resignations of their bishops in response to what was seen as widespread failure to properly deal with cases of clerical sexual abuse.

Nearly all the Chilean bishops offered their resignations to Pope Francis in May 2018 after a three-day meeting at the Vatican to discuss the abuse scandal detailed in a 2,300-page report compiled by Archbishop Charles Scicluna of Malta and his aide, Father Jordi Bertomeu.

Born in Argentina in 1953, Bishop-elect Lorenzelli, professed his vows in Rome and was ordained a priest in Genoa in 1981. After serving in several positions within the Salesian community in Italy, he was appointed in 2012 as head of the Salesian provincial house in Chile.

After ending his term in 2018, the newly appointed bishop became director of the Salesian community in Vatican City as well as official chaplain of the Vatican police force.

Bishop-elect Irarrazaval was ordained a priest for the Santiago archdiocese in 1996 and has served positions in several parishes and Catholic universities in Chile.

Since 2011, he has been pastor of the parish of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Providence, also known as the parish community of "El Bosque." The previous pastor, former priest Fernando Karadima, was sentenced by the Vatican to a life of prayer and penance after he was found guilty of sexual abuse.

Pope Francis expelled Karadima from the priesthood in late September after meeting with several survivors – both lay and clergy – who were victims of sexual abuse at the hands of the former priest.