

Chicago priest prepares to join doctrinal congregation at the Vatican

CHICAGO (CNS) – Father Andrew Liaugminas of the Archdiocese of Chicago, has been appointed to serve as an official for the doctrinal section of the Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

The 37-year-old priest will serve with the congregation for five years and will support the congregation’s work promoting the church’s teachings on faith and morals.

The oldest of the Roman Curia’s nine congregations, the CDF was founded in 1542 by Pope Paul III to promote and safeguard the church’s teachings throughout the world.

Today, the CDF is responsible for fostering a greater understanding of the faith, aiding bishops in their role as teachers of the faith and answering difficult questions that arise on faith and morals.

Rome is a familiar place to Father Liaugminas, who earned a doctorate in sacred theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in 2017. He was nominated for the university’s Bellarmine Award in 2018.

Father Liaugminas was ordained to the priesthood in 2010 and served as associate pastor of Mary, Seat of Wisdom Parish in Park Ridge, Illinois, from 2010 to 2013.

For the past four years, he has served as chaplain and director of Calvert House, the Catholic chaplaincy at the University of Chicago, and taught theology to seminarians at Mundelein Seminary.

The appointment to the CDF was unexpected, Father Liaugminas

said.

“It came as a surprise to me,” he told Chicago Catholic, archdiocesan newspaper. “After praying over this, I saw that it was the Lord’s will. There was a real sense of the Holy Spirit being in this call to service.

“While the roles of university chaplain and seminary professor are different in several ways, in both roles I was serving the encounter with Jesus Christ and helping people understand the beauty of our faith,” he said.

As a pastor to students on a secular campus, he was able to draw on his studies in Rome to help them answer the deep questions of faith they were asking.

“In an academic setting where students and professors are used to asking critical questions and seeking answers through engaging conversations, a Catholic chaplaincy serves to engage the questions people are asking and to help them discover the beauty and truth of our faith,” he said.

The CDF is staffed by priests from around the world. Father Liaugminas, who has some fluency in six languages, will have responsibilities covering the English-speaking world.

For Catholics who may not be familiar with the role of the CDF, the Chicago priest said it helps to think of it as having the responsibility and mission of assisting those in the church who have the sacred duty of passing on the faith.

The work trusts in the intercession of the Holy Spirit, who Jesus promised would lead the faithful into the whole truth at all times, he said.

“The congregation has a special responsibility to serve the Holy Father and the universal church in helping to clarify questions of the faith and settle questions that arise,” he explained. “In all matters concerning faith and morals, the

congregation offers a vital and indispensable service to help Catholics navigate important topics in the light of Christ.”

Father Liaugminas said he hopes his appointment will help educate the faithful in the Chicago Archdiocese about the work of the universal church and how it connects to the local church.

“The Vatican serves the entire universal church, and in turn, each local diocese is asked to help contribute to the functioning of the whole,” he said.

By sending one of its priests to serve at the Vatican, a diocese gives back to the universal church and shows its solidarity with it.

“It is a service that concretely expresses the relationship our local church has with the universal church,” he said, “and how we are called to share our resources for the good of the whole church.”

Duriga is editor of Chicago Catholic, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Chicago.