

Pope appoints Savannah, Ga., bishop to be archbishop of Atlanta

WASHINGTON (CNS) – Pope Francis has appointed Bishop Gregory J. Hartmayer of Savannah, Georgia, to be the archbishop of Atlanta.

He succeeds Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory, who was Atlanta's archbishop from 2005 until he was appointed to head the Archdiocese of Washington in 2019.

The appointment was announced March 5 in Washington by Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States.

A Conventual Franciscan, Archbishop Hartmayer, 68, has served as Savannah's 14th bishop since Pope Benedict XVI appointed him to head that diocese July 19, 2011.

In Atlanta, Auxiliary Bishop Joel M. Konzen has been serving as administrator of the Archdiocese of Atlanta since Archbishop Gregory's appointment to Washington.

Archbishop Hartmayer will be installed as Atlanta's archbishop May 6 at St. Peter Chanel Church in Roswell, Georgia.

It will be something of a homecoming for him as he was the pastor of St. John Vianney Parish in Lithia Springs, Georgia, in the archdiocese at the time of his appointment to head the Diocese of Savannah. Immediately prior to that, he was the pastor of St. Philip Benizi Parish in Jonesboro, Georgia, for 15 years.

"I warmly welcome him as an episcopal colleague who will join (Atlanta Auxiliary) Bishop Bernard E. Shlesinger III and me in caring for this wonderful Catholic community," Bishop Konzen

said in a statement issued shortly after the announcement of Archbishop Hartmayer's appointment.

"We are looking forward to formally welcoming our new shepherd. I ask you to keep Archbishop Hartmayer, Bishop Shlesinger and me in your prayers as we prepare for that happy day," he added.

Calling the newly named archbishop an "extraordinary shepherd," Archbishop Gregory noted he had "served with great distinction" in the Atlanta Archdiocese before going to Savannah.

"He knows the people and is deeply loved and respected" in the archdiocese and "will be an excellent archbishop. ... The people of God will be blessed through his ministry and care," Archbishop Gregory said in a statement.

Gregory John Hartmayer, son of the late John and Sally Hartmayer, was born Nov. 21, 1951, in Buffalo, New York. He was raised in Tonawanda, New York, a northern suburb of Buffalo. His family belonged to St. Amelia Parish, and he attended the parish elementary school.

He attended Cardinal O'Hara High School in Tonawanda, which is operated by the Conventual Franciscan Friars. He graduated in 1969 and joined the Conventual Franciscans at their St. Joseph Cupertino Novitiate in Ellicott City, Maryland, which is in the Archdiocese of Baltimore. He professed his simple vows there Aug. 15, 1970.

Archbishop Hartmayer then pursued studies at St. Hyacinth College and Seminary in Granby, Massachusetts, where he earned a bachelor's degree in philosophy. He professed his solemn vows as a Conventual Franciscan friar on Aug. 15, 1973. He was ordained a priest May 5, 1979, by Bishop Howard J. Hubbard of Albany, New York, at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Albany.

Archbishop Hartmayer also has three master's degrees: in divinity from St. Anthony-on-Hudson in Rensselaer, New York, in pastoral counseling from Emmanuel College in Boston and in education from Boston College.

After his ordination, he was a guidance counselor, teacher and principal at schools in Baltimore, in various cities in New York and in Florida.

He has held posts within his religious order's Province of St Anthony of Padua and has been a delegate to provincial chapters.

Archbishop Hartmayer has an older brother, C. Douglas, and a younger brother, John, both of whom continue to live in western New York with their families. His sister, Mary Jo Kotacka, and her husband, Rolf, live in Bluffton, South Carolina.