The following is the letter sent by Archbishop John C. Favalora to all the archdiocesan priests on April 20, when it was announced that his request to retire had been accepted by Pope Benedict XVI.

Dear Monsignor/Father:

The Archdiocese of Miami has received good news today that our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, has appointed as our fourth Metropolitan Archbishop one of our own, well-known, native sons. On

Archbishop-designate Thomas Wenski, currently bishop of Orlando and formerly a Miami priest and auxiliary bishop, speaks to the media after the press conference where it was announced that he had been named fourth archbishop of Miami.

“‘Amazing story’, divine timing cited in Archbishop-designate Thomas Wenski’s appointment as Miami’s fourth archbishop

MIA MII — Perhaps you can go home again.

At least that would seem to be the case for Archbishop-designate Thomas G. Wenski, the “native son” appointed to succeed Archbishop John C. Favalora as archbishop of Miami.

Those present at the April 20 press conference where the appointment was announced agreed it was an inspired choice.
I received permission to seek a coadjutor at the end of 2008 and the official process began in late spring 2009. By March of 2010, I learned of the Holy Father’s selection. Immediately, it became evident to me that our new archbishop did not need the time to understudy; he already had many more years of active ministry here than I do. There was no practical reason to delay his appointment until December.

It was my judgment that the needs and well being of the archdiocese would be better served by an earlier transition. Upon my request, I was permitted to tender my resignation and I received the Holy Father’s blessing in accord with canon 401, §2.

While I reiterate that I still enjoy good health, I also recognize that I no longer have the stamina and spirit of earlier years. Moreover, I recognize that the current challenges facing the archdiocese now could benefit from new eyes and fresh insights and energies.

I hope, with God’s grace, to enjoy more much-needed time for reading, praying and doing work among the poor. I look forward to this.

Finally, I want you to know of my continuing fraternal prayers for you. I beg from you a daily commendation of me before our Eucharistic Lord.

May the Lord continue to bless you and your priestly ministry abundantly. With personal good wishes, I am
Sincerely in the Lord,
John C. Favalora
Apostolic Administrator

Archbishop Wenski, I believe, will bring these and so many more gifts to this office. He will lead us very well.

 Shortly, I will move to Villa McCarthy and begin my retirement years. I do so with much peace. I thank each and all of you for your dedicated service to our people. I thank you for your support and prayers during my years as chief shepherd. We have weathered many serious storms together; we have enjoyed much sunshine together. I thank you for your many kindnesses to me in so many ways.

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Archbishop designate Thomas Wenski, left, and Archbishop John C. Favalora embrace at the Sign of Peace during the Mass that followed the announcement.

ARCHBISHOP
FROM A1

Archbishop Thomas Wenski and assure him of our joy, prayers and support.

At the same time, I express my gratitude to His Holiness for having had the blessing and privilege of serving as your chief shepherd for almost 16 years.

In the fall of 2008, I began the process of preparing for my successor. It was becoming more and more evident to me that the complexity of the archdiocese warranted consideration for a coadjutor. Our diverse cultural mix, our many international relations and interactions because of our immigrant component, as well as our many pastoral and financial challenges, would seem to indicate that time to understudy would be very helpful to the next archbishop. It would be good for him to be involved with the decisions that would affect his tenure.

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Apostolic Administrator

ARZOBISPO
VIENE DE LA PÁGINA 1

Querido Monseñor/Padre:

En el día de hoy, la Arquidiócesis de Miami ha recibido la buena nueva de que nuestro Santo Padre, el Papa Benedicto XVI, ha nombrado a uno de nuestros reconocidos hijos nativos como cuarto Arzobispo Metropolitano. A nombre de todos nosotros, felicito al arzobispo Thomas Wenski, y le expreso nuestra alegría, oraciones y apoyo.

A la vez, deseo expresar mi agradecimiento a Su Santidad por haber tenido la bendición y el privilegio de servirles como su pastor principal por casi 16 años.

En el otoño de 2008, inicié el proceso de preparar mi sucesión. Me parecía cada vez más claro que la complejidad de la Arquidiócesis ameritaba que se considerara un coadjutor. Nuestra diversa mezcla de culturas, las múltiples relaciones e interacciones internacionales debido a nuestro componente inmigrante, al igual que nuestros desafíos pastorales y económicos, parecían indicar que al arzobispo sucesor le conpondría tener tiempo para familiarizarse y estar involucrado en las decisiones que afectarían su incumbencia.

A finales de 2008 recibí permiso para buscar un coadjutor, y a finales de la primavera de 2009 comenzó el proceso oficial. En marzo de 2010, supe cuál era la selección del Santo Padre. De inmediato, me pareció claro que nuestro nuevo arzobispo no tendría necesidad de familiarizarse, pues tenía muchos años más de ministerio activo aquí que yo. No había razón para retardar su nombramiento hasta diciembre.

A mi juicio, realizar la transición más temprano sería de mayor provecho para las necesidades y el bienestar de la Arquidiócesis. A solicitud mía, me permitió presentar mi renuncia, y recibí la bendición del Santo Padre de acuerdo con el canon 401, §2.

Aunque reitero que aún disfruto de buena salud, también reconozco que ya no tengo la fuerza ni el espíritu de los años anteriores. Es más, reconozco que los actuales desafíos que enfrenta la Arquidiócesis ahora se pueden beneficiar de nuevos ojos, entendimiento y energía. Creo que el arzobispo Wenski traerá estos y muchos otros dones a este oficio. Él nos dirigirá muy bien.

Dentro de poco, me mudaré a Villa McCarthy para iniciar mis años de retiro, algo que hago con mucha paz. Agradezco a todos y cada uno de ustedes su dedicado servicio a nuestro pueblo. Les agradezco su apoyo y oraciones durante mis años como su pastor principal. Juntos hemos enfrentado muchas tormentas, y juntos hemos disfrutado la luz del sol. Les expreso mi agradecimiento por manifestarme su amabilidad de tantas maneras.

Con la gracia de Dios, espero disfrutar un tiempo muy necesario para la lectura, la oración y para trabajar entre los pobres, algo que anhelo con anticipación.

Por último, deseo expresarles mis constantes oraciones fraternales por ustedes. Les ruego que me encomienden a diario ante el Señor Eucarístico.

Que el Señor continúe bendiciéndonos en abundancia, y a su ministerio sacerdotal. Con los mejores deseos, quedo de ustedes, sinceramente en el Señor,
John C. Favalora
Administrador Apostólico
FAITH EDUCATION

Radio Paz 20th anniversary gala, Saturday, May 8, 7 p.m., Interoceanical Hotel, 100 Chopin Plaza, Miami. Honoring the life and work of Sister Hilda Alonso, Daughters of Charity. Reservations: www.paxcc.org/ radiopaz or 305-638-9729.

Growing Your Congregation,” non-denominational workshop focusing on stabilizing existing congregations, demonstrating transparency and building mission-based ministries, among other topics. Saturday, May 15, 8:45 a.m.-4 p.m., Barry University Andres School of Business, 11300 N.E. Second Ave., Miami Shores. $220 covers lunch, workshop and registration materials for up to three people of the same faith community. 305-899-3514, www.barry.edu/bicicd.


50th Jubilee Mass and Picnic, Chaminade-Madonna College Preparatory, 500 East Chaminade Drive, Hollywood. Saturday, May 22, 4 p.m. Join the celebration of 50 years of Catholic education with a Mass presided by Archbishop John C. Favalora in the gym at 4 p.m., followed by a picnic on the school grounds. Free admission; bring the whole family! Information: www.cmions.org.

St. Rose of Lima 22nd annual Golf & Tennis Classic, Sunday, May 23, Miami Shores Country Club, 10000 Biscayne Blvd., Miami Shores. Registration begins at 10:30 A.M. Shotgun start at 1:00 P.M. A dinner and awards ceremony will follow. Proceeds will be used to defray costs of running our school. Information: http://strosegolf.com.

Blessed Trinity 24th annual Golf Tournament, Saturday, June 5, 7 a.m. Fun, fellowship and great prizes. Awards ceremony, auction and luncheon at the Parish Hall immediately following the tournament. Participants and sponsors welcome. 305-807-3736, ivannia@mac.com.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

“With This Ring,” Engaged Encounter life skills weekend, Friday May 14, 6:30-10 p.m. and Saturday, May 15, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., St. Louis Church, 7270 S.W. 120 St., Pinecrest. Registration required. 305-762-1140, famlife@theadom.org.

God’s Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage, marriage preparation supplement based on Pope John Paul II’s Theology of the Body. Saturday, May 15, Casa Caná, 480 E., Eighth St., Hialeah. Registration: joyfilledmarriage@gmail.com, 305-762-1140.

RETREATS/DAYS OF REFLECTION

MorningStar Renewal Center, 7275 S.W. 124 St., Miami. Reservations required for all retreats. 305-238-4367 or info@morningstarrenewal.org.

Mission/Day Retreats will be held at our Center, 1301 S.W. 136 St., Davie. Information required: 954-394-0167.

Transforma tu Pérvida, presentación por Lígia M. Houben, consejera de duelo y licenciada en psicología y estudios religiosos. Sábado, 8 de mayo, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Abierto al público. $10 por persona.

“Sábado Bíblico: Antiguo Testamento”, con el Rev. Pablo Laguna, experto en lograr que los discursos académicos y de investigación sean entendidos por los seguidores de Jesús. Sábado, 15 de mayo, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Immersion in Spanish Language and Culture, a three-week course providing necessary communication skills in Spanish for daily life situations. Designed for priests, laity and religious. May 30-June 17

Missionaries in Our Midst,” MorningStar Renewal Center, 7275 S.W. 124 St., Miami. Share the experience of missions throughout the world through the experiences of missionaries. A simple dinner will be offered. $15 per person, per session, or $50/ person for all three. Registration required: 305-238-4367 or info@morningstarrenewal.org. Presenting three different missions over three dynamic Wednesday evenings:

• May 5 - The Emerging, Growing Church: Asia, Africa and India
• May 12 - The Church and Suffering: Haiti
• May 19 - The Church of the Americas

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Virtus workshops: To help parents, teachers and anyone who works with children recognize signs of sexual abuse and spot abusers. Free. All sessions in English, except where noted. Information: 305-762-1250 or jrayburn@theadom.org:

• Friday, May 14, 6 p.m., Notre-Dame D’Haiti Mission, Miami
• Saturday, May 15, 9 a.m., Mother of Christ Church, Miami

Vocations

Vocations discernment group for men 18 or older considering a vocation to the priesthood. Call for information about meetings in the archdiocesan Pastoral Center, 305-762-1137 or vocations@theadom.org.
WENSKI
FROM PAGE 1

ready,” Bishop Estevez said. Moreover, “The needs of the place and the personality fit so well. We have other leaders but they don’t know the community as well as Bishop Wenski. We have other leaders but they don’t have the linguistics.”

Bishop Wenski, the son of a Polish immigrant, speaks fluent Spanish and Creole. He learned Spanish while in the seminary, listening to Cuban radio and “hanging out” with exiles in Hialeah. He learned Creole in Haiti a few years after being ordained a priest and perfected it during 18 years of circuit-riding ministry to Haitians from Homestead to Belle Glade.

“The convergence of the needs and the leadership of the man is just perfect,” Bishop Estevez said.

“He’s the only man for the job,” said Father Daniel Kubala, pastor of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in South Miami. “He’s got the talents. He’s got the knowhow. He’s got the ability. He’s got the love for the Church of Miami.”

Father Kubala and Archbishop-designate Wenski became fast friends in the seminary and have remained so for decades. They have traveled together to Cuba, Haiti and China.

Now, Father Kubala said, “I owe obedience to a friend.”

For Father José Espino, pastor of San Lazaro Parish in Hialeah, Archbishop-designate Wenski is both friend and mentor.

“Tom was the first person I talked to about the priesthood, because he was a deacon at St. Benedict (in Hialeah),” said Father Espino, who entered the seminary in 1976, the same year Miami’s new archbishop was ordained a priest.

Father Espino said Archbishop-designate Wenski combines knowledge of south Florida with a “heart that is pastoral and he’s a good administrator also.”

Vicky Rezola, who served as secretary to the new archbishop when he headed Catholic Charities in the Archdiocese of Miami, described him as “a person who is totally dedicated and a tireless worker.

“It’s the best thing that could happen to Miami. I’m sorry for Orlando,” she added.

“I’m very excited,” said Myriam Mezadieu, chief administrator of Catholic Legal Services who has known Archbishop-designate Wenski since the days when he worked as pastor of Notre-Dame d’Haiti Mission in Miami. “This is great news for the Archdiocese of Miami, for all of us, in particular for the Haitians.”

“One of the strengths of the new bishop is his ability to communicate with all of us,” said Father Franky Jean, pastor of Holy Family Parish in North Miami. “He speaks Creole more than I do. He speaks Spanish, too. He knows the priests. He knows the people and especially the Haitian people; we always have a love for him.”

“I think it’s very positive, very good,” said Father Federico Capdepon, pastor of St. Martha Church, which is located next door to the Pastoral Center. “He’s a native. He knows everything here.”

“I hope that he establishes a dialogue with priests immediately,” Father Capdepon added. “This has been a very difficult decade and the morale needs to be raised. So we look at the new bishop with great hope so that with communication and dialogue we can envision a new day.”

Archbishop-designate Wenski will be installed June 1 at St. Mary Cathedral. At the end of June, he will travel to Rome to receive the pallium — the symbol of his office as Metropolitan Archbishop of the Province of Florida — from Pope Benedict XVI.