



Department of Communication

Archdiocese of San Antonio

For Immediate Release
March 7, 2008

Archbishop Jose Gomez names Father Tony Vilano new rector of San Fernando Cathedral

Archbishop Jose H. Gomez announced today that he has appointed Father Tony Vilano to serve as the new rector of San Fernando Cathedral.

Father Vilano, 42, currently serves the Archdiocese of San Antonio as Director of Department of Clergy and Consecrated Life and Pastor of St. Ann's Church in La Vernia, TX. He has spent his 11 years as a priest at a number of parishes in the archdiocese, beginning in 1996, with his first assignment at Notre Dame Parish in Kerrville, TX where he served as Parochial Vicar. Since 2000, he served as pastor at St. Rose of Lima and St. Joseph's in Charlotte and Tilden, and St. Mary's parish in Fredricksburg.

Making the announcement at a press conference held at the café at San Fernando Cathedral, Archbishop Gomez said, "Father Vilano's ability to bring people together, developing in them a sense of unity and purpose, will be invaluable as he works with people of the parish and their community." He especially pointed to Vilano's accomplishments while at St. Mary's in Fredricksburg, where he helped to increase student enrollment four consecutive years and conducted a successful \$4.5 million capital campaign to build a state-of-the-art gymnasium and community center.

"I come to San Fernando Cathedral with no set agenda," Father Vilano said. "I intend to spend the months ahead simply listening to the people and responding to their needs." Vilano said that he has learned much from the people at every assignment he has had as a priest, "My ministry is enriched by the unselfish giving of time and talent by the people of parishes where I have served."

Father Vilano succeeds Father David Garcia who served as rector of the cathedral for thirteen years. During that time, Father Garcia helped to further its historical, cultural and spiritual legacy. He led a successful capital campaign, raising more than \$21 million to transform its historic sanctuary and expand the center city complex with two new buildings, Cathedral Centre and the AT&T Community Centre at San Fernando. He also was instrumental in proposing the current renovations of Main

Plaza. Father Garcia has already begun his new assignment as Director of The Old Spanish Missions, but will remain as rector of San Fernando Cathedral until June 1, 2008.

Commenting on Father Vilano's selection as his successor, Father Garcia said, "Now it is time to pass the torch on to a new generation of leaders. I am delighted with the choice of Fr. Vilano. I am convinced he will be a great addition to this place, and our people will come to love him. I am committed to support him in any way I can."

Pointing to the unique role San Fernando Cathedral and its people have played in the history and growth of San Antonio, Archbishop Gomez saluted Father Garcia for the leadership and service he has provided to the Catholic Church and the whole community. He closed by saying, "Father Garcia, on behalf of the people of the Archdiocese I offer my heartfelt thanks."

Father Garcia also thanked Archbishop Gomez for his confidence and leadership, while extending his gratitude to Archbishop Patrick Flores, "I thank Archbishop Flores, my mentor for many years, who appointed me to many positions in the archdiocese as well as San Fernando."

Sunday, March 9th, San Fernando Cathedral will mark its 277th anniversary, making it the oldest cathedral sanctuary in the United States. The cathedral remains a vibrant urban parish, celebrating 7 Masses each weekend, 1 that is broadcast internationally by satellite, more than 900 baptisms, 100 weddings, 100 funerals, and countless other services and special events each year, most notably the staging of the *Good Friday Passion Play*, which is scheduled for March 21st.

Father Vilano was born in Landstuhl, Germany in 1965 to Jose Antonio and Rosalinda Vilano. One of four children in this Air Force family, he lived many places across the country, but calls San Antonio home. He graduated in 1984 from Judson High School and earned his BA in Political Science from the University of Texas at San Antonio in 1990. Vilano is an alumnus of Assumption Seminary and received his Masters of Divinity degree from Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio. He was ordained on May 17, 1996 at Prince of Peace Church in San Antonio.

In his current capacity as Director of Department of Clergy and Consecrated Life, Father Vilano assists the archbishop in the pastoral care of all our priests and deacons. Through his office, he assists clergy to continue their personal and spiritual growth through annual retreats, clergy days and annual convocations. He will continue to serve in this position.

Father Vilano will officially take his new position as rector on June 3, 2008.