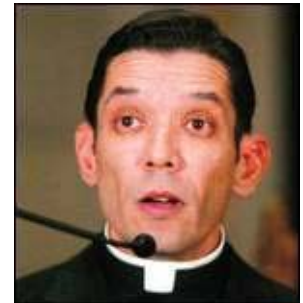


## Hispanic bishop to lead in Detroit

**BY GINA DAMRON, CHRISTY ARBOSCELLO and DAVID CRUMM**

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Msgr. Daniel Flores, 45, of the Diocese of Corpus Christi will be the first Hispanic bishop in the Archdiocese of Detroit. (KIMBERLY P. MITCHELL/Detroit Free Press)

### **Msgr. Daniel Flores**

- **Age:** 45; a native of Palacios, Texas

- **New job:** Auxiliary bishop, Archdiocese of Detroit

- **Comes from:** Diocese of Corpus Christi, Texas, where he most recently served as rector of Corpus Christi Cathedral

- **Education:** Bachelor's degree in

philosophy and  
master's degree in  
divinity, University of  
Dallas; doctorate in  
theology, North  
American College,  
Casa Santa Maria in  
Rome

- **Ordained:** January  
1988, in Diocese of  
Corpus Christi

- **To be installed in  
Detroit:** Nov. 29 at  
Most Blessed  
Sacrament Cathedral  
in Detroit.

- **More information:**  
[www.aodonline.org](http://www.aodonline.org)

#### **By the numbers**

*371,627*

Estimated Michigan  
Hispanic population in  
2005, up 15% since  
2000

*141,049*

Estimated number of  
Hispanic people in  
Wayne, Oakland and  
Macomb counties in  
2005

*128,000\**

Number of Hispanic  
Catholics in  
Archdiocese of Detroit

(Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Monroe, Lapeer and St. Clair counties), about 10% of all Catholics in the archdiocese

\*Actual number believed to be higher.

**Sources: U.S. census; Archdiocese of Detroit**

Msgr. Daniel Flores, who will soon become the first Hispanic to serve as a bishop in the Archdiocese of Detroit, is a man passionate about education, an engaging preacher who peppers his sermons with personal stories and a priest with a special sensitivity for those in need.

Oh, and he's a baseball fan.

(Note to Tigers: He's a Yankees fan, so he's a candidate for conversion.)

"He's a real down-to-earth guy," Michael Mantz, a deacon at Corpus Christi Cathedral in Texas, where Flores most recently served as rector, said Saturday. "I would say that Msgr. Flores is probably one of the most well-liked and respected priests in this diocese."

Early Saturday, the archdiocese announced that Pope Benedict XVI had named Flores, 45, to be the newest bishop to serve the 1.3 million Catholics in six southeast Michigan counties, from the Thumb to the Ohio line.

Flores, a Texas native who was ordained a priest in the Diocese of Corpus Christi in January 1988, also is believed to be the first Hispanic to serve as a bishop in a mainline Christian denomination in Michigan.

The significance of the appointment was not lost on Detroit Cardinal Adam Maida.

"I am particularly delighted that Bishop-elect Flores will be the first Hispanic bishop to serve in Detroit, if I'm not mistaken," Maida said Saturday during a service at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, where he introduced Flores.

The cardinal had good reason to be thrilled. Virtually all mainline Christian denominations in Michigan are watching the state's growing Hispanic population and are working to develop Hispanic ministries and train clergy in Spanish. Fourteen parishes in the archdiocese offer masses in Spanish.

Michigan's Hispanic population rose an estimated 15% from 2000, to almost 372,000 in 2005, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. There are about 128,000 Hispanic Catholics throughout the six-county archdiocese -- Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Monroe, Lapeer and St. Clair -- accounting for about 10% of all of the Catholics in that area, the archdiocese said. Church officials believe the actual number is higher.

Local Hispanic Catholics hailed Flores' appointment.

"It's wonderful news. We were expecting some kind of help because nobody took care of the Hispanic community for some time," Rochester Hills resident Raul Castillo, who attends St. Vincent in Pontiac, said after the service.

He said he looks forward to meeting the new bishop in person.

"We expect him to visit us," Castillo said.

Flores will be formally installed as an auxiliary bishop Nov. 29 at Most Blessed Sacrament Cathedral in Detroit. He flew to the city for a brief meeting with Catholic leaders Saturday and stayed for the prayer service and blessing at Sacred Heart.

At the seminary chapel Saturday afternoon, beneath massive stained glass windowpanes and a vivid bouquet of flowers, followers waited expectantly in the pews to greet Flores.

He received multiple standing ovations and listened with head bowed and hands folded as Maida praised him, saying Flores is known for boosting church attendance, relating well to worshippers of all ages and having top organizational skills, sharp intelligence and an unshakable faith.

Flores, who spoke first in English and then in Spanish, said he looks forward to serving in the Detroit area.

"I am a priest of Detroit now by the will of the Holy Father," he said. "I have a great deal to learn about how to serve the people of this archdiocese."

Most Spanish-speaking Americans share a Catholic heritage, so the Catholic Church has worked hardest to reach out to them. Landmark Catholic parishes in Detroit, including Ste. Anne's and Holy Redeemer, have large Hispanic congregations and offer regular Spanish-language masses.

But mainline Protestant groups and even many Pentecostal churches are courting Hispanic families, as well.

When Flores is installed, he will serve as one of Maida's assistants, regularly visiting local parishes and, overall, helping the cardinal to administer the archdiocese. Maida said Flores will specialize in Hispanic issues.

This is a job that Flores will excel at, said Bishop Edmond Carmody of the Corpus Christi Cathedral. Still, he said, getting the appointment does create added pressure and sometimes takes away from the duties priests enjoy most.

"What every priest wants is to be a pastor in a parish, to carry on and do good work," Carmody said Saturday. "That's a great life for a priest. You become a bishop and that all changes."

Still, metro Detroiters can't wait for Flores to take his place in the archdiocese.

Hector Hernandez of Taylor, who attends Ste. Anne's, said he hopes Flores is able to bring the Hispanic community closer.

"Unite us," he said.

Contact **DAVID CRUMM** at 313-223-4526 or [dcrumm@freepress.com](mailto:dcrumm@freepress.com).

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