



THE BASILICA

of the NATIONAL SHRINE of the IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 23, 2021

Basilica Announces New Director of Liturgy

Father Ismael Ayala to succeed Father Michael Weston

His Eminence, Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory, Archbishop of Washington and Chairman of the National Shrine Board of Trustees, has released Father Ismael N. Ayala to succeed Father Michael D. Weston as Director of Liturgy for the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

Father Ayala was ordained in 2010 and is currently the pastor of Saint Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church in Silver Spring, Maryland. Father Ayala brings to the National Shrine pastoral experience as well as having served four years as Director of the Office of Worship for the Archdiocese of Washington during which time he assisted in the planning of the Canonization Mass of Saint Junípero Serra celebrated on the East Portico of the National Shrine by Pope Francis in 2015.

Monsignor Walter Rossi, Rector of the National Shrine, expressed his gratitude to Cardinal Gregory for assigning Father Ayala and his appreciation to Father Ayala for his willingness to serve at the National Shrine, stating, "Father Mel has been a great friend of Mary's Shrine for many years, and we look forward to having him enhance our staff with his priestly ministry, gracious personality, and liturgical skills."

Father Ayala will begin his tenure at the National Shrine on September 20, 2021.

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