



Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on August 29, 2022

First Singaporean Cardinal Appointed in Rome August 27

SINGAPORE — As of August 27, Singapore's fourth archbishop and newly elected cardinal William Goh — the leader of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Singapore — became the first Singaporean cardinal to be appointed in Rome.

At a ceremony called a consistory in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, Pope Francis inducted 20 cardinals from around the world. Archbishop Goh was one of the 20 cardinals inducted.

The consistory is significant as it marks Pope Francis' preparations for the Church's future with a new batch of cardinals who will function as his advisors and administrators in the Vatican and from around the world.



AP Images
William Goh

Also, those cardinals younger than 80 years of age — 16 of the 20 newcomers — can convene in a papal conclave to elect a new pope from among themselves should Pope Francis resign or pass on.

Cardinal Goh, 64, who is the fourth leader of the Catholic Church in Singapore, is one of the 16 who is younger than 80 years of age.

Moreover, Cardinal Goh was allocated a titular church in the diocese of Rome — the Church of Santa Maria Regina Pacis in Ostia Lido.

The Catholic Church in Singapore issued a statement of celebration following the Archbishop's election to cardinal. It announced, "The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Singapore is jubilant and rejoices! From our very own, has risen one who is now appointed to the Sacred College of Cardinals."

Cardinal Goh, in a Facebook post on June 1, stated:

Finally, now that I have been chosen to be a member of the College of Cardinals, the Lord is telling me that it is not enough for me to drive the local church to greater heights but I must together with the other Cardinals look after the Universal Church by assisting and advising the Holy Father. A greater responsibility is now placed on me beyond the narrow confines of the archdiocese. Please pray that I might have the strength, the humility, the wisdom, the holiness and fortitude to give up my life completely for the service of our Holy Father and the Universal Church, as well as continue to look after the interests of the local church in Singapore and also the dioceses of Malaysia and Brunei of which we are a member of the Regional Bishops Conference. Let us walk together in faith, love and prayer, journeying with each other in mutual trust and respect between clergy and the laity, towards the goal of realizing the New Evangelization, in line with the thrust of the Universal Church.



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The other new cardinals hail from countries such as Britain, South Korea, Spain, France, Nigeria, Brazil, India, the United States, East Timor, Italy, Ghana, Paraguay, and Colombia.

Pope Francis, who selected prelates who generally align with his idea of a more “inclusive” and “progressive” Church, advised the new cardinals, “A Cardinal loves the Church, always with that same spiritual fire, whether dealing with great questions or handling everyday problems, with the powerful of this world or those ordinary people who are great in God’s eyes.”

The pontiff further encouraged these cardinals to bear in mind “poor families, migrant and homeless persons.”

Elected as pope in 2013, Pope Francis has selected 83 of the 132 cardinal electors, or about 63 percent as of the August 27 consistory.

One diplomat has commented that Pope Francis’ selection of cardinals marks a “tilt towards Asia”. This raises the possibility that the next pope could even be from the region. Besides Cardinal Goh from Singapore, six out of the 21 cardinals at the most recent August 2022 consistory hail from Asian countries such as India, Korea, Mongolia, and Timor Leste.

The 85-year-old pontiff told Reuters in an interview last month that though he might resign in the future for health reasons (as opposed to dying in office), he has no plans to do so anytime soon. This means he could name even more cardinals as soon as next year.

Background of Cardinal Goh

Before serving as the fourth archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Singapore, Cardinal Goh started his theological studies in philosophy at the Major Seminary (College General) in Malaysia, as well as theology at the St. Francis Xavier Major Seminary in Singapore. According to his [personal testimony](#) about his journey to the priesthood, Cardinal Goh stated that it was his mother’s Catholic “faith and devotion,” that planted the seeds of his vocation at a tender age. Cardinal Goh recounted:

God must have loved me — He gave me a loving mother who was very prayerful. Even before I was born, my mother was known to be a devout and God-fearing woman. As a young child, I would observe my mother praying the rosary devoutly every day before the altar, often waking up early in the morning to do so. So when I was a young boy of about four years old, as far as I could remember, my mother would bring me along with her to the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes to pray to Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception every Saturday morning. After which, she would proceed to Novena Church to attend at least two sessions of the Novena. Of course, such long prayer sessions were rather boring to me at that young age. I suppose Our Lady must have looked at me with love then. In retrospect, I realized that it must have been my mother’s faith and devotion to Our Lady that sowed the seed of my vocation without my consciously being aware of it.

Following Aug 27’s ordinary consistory, Pope Francis has called for an extraordinary consistory on 29 and 30 August, the first since 2015. The extraordinary consistory will conclude with the pontiff’s mass on 30 August with all the new cardinals as well as the College of Cardinals in St. Peter’s Basilica. When Cardinal Goh returns from Rome to Singapore, he will be celebrating a Thanksgiving Solemn Mass at St. Joseph’s Church in Singapore, on the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.



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