



Most Rev. Felipe J. Estévez

Born: February 5, 1946, Havana, Cuba

Education: Séminaire de Philosophie and Séminaire des Missions Étrangères; Licentiate in Theology, Montreal University in Canada; Master of Arts from Barry University, Miami Shores; Doctorate in Sacred Theology, Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome.

Ordained: May 30, 1970, Fort Wayne, Ind., for the Diocese of Matanzas, Cuba

Incardinated into the Archdiocese of Miami: February 9, 1979

Named Auxiliary Bishop of Miami: November 21, 2003

Episcopal Ordination: January 7, 2004, Miami

Installed Bishop of St. Augustine: June 2, 2011



The 10th bishop of the Diocese of St. Augustine, Felipe J. Estévez brings a passion for the pastoral dimension of ministry as well as the sensibilities of an immigrant and the understanding of how the rich heritage of Hispanic Catholics will shape the future church.

Bishop Estévez was born in Cuba and as a boy watched the rise of Fidel Castro. The church suffered under the communists, who closed churches and schools and persecuted clergy and religious. Fearful parents began spiring their children out of the country in what became known as Operation Pedro Pan.

From 1960 to 1962, 14,000 Cuban children were secretly sent to the United States, where Catholic Charities in Miami, under the leadership of Msgr. Bryan Walsh coordinated their care. One of the children was 15-year-old Felipe Estévez.

He was sent to Fort Wayne, Ind., to live at a Catholic orphanage for a year until his family could leave Cuba.

After studying for the priesthood in Montreal, Canada, he was ordained in Fort Wayne, Ind., and moved to Honduras, hoping that he could return to Cuba. He taught in a seminary for five years and finally conceded that ministry in Cuba was not in his future.



Bishop Estévez ordains four men to the priesthood on May 4, 2019, at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Augustine.



Archbishop John Favalora of Miami ordains Father Estévez auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Miami on January 7, 2004.

“Our core path will be one of becoming missionary disciples, focused on this ideal of ‘oneness’ among us and across all faiths.”

Bishop Felipe J. Estévez

In 1975 he moved to Miami, where the archdiocese needed multilingual priests. He joined the faculty of St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary in Boynton Beach and within five years became its president and rector.

In 1987, he became campus minister at Florida International University, Miami, and pastor at the nearby St. Agatha Parish. In 2001, he returned to St. Vincent as the dean of spiritual formation.

His leadership was recognized by the church in 2003 when he was named auxiliary bishop of Miami. He oversaw the archdiocese’s ministry of pastoral services including family life, youth, campus, prison and respect life ministries, as well as all the apostolic movements.



Bishop Felipe Estévez served as auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Miami before he was named bishop of St. Augustine in 2011.

In 2010, Archbishop Thomas Wenski appointed Bishop Estévez vicar general and he remained in that position until he was installed bishop of the Diocese of St. Augustine on June 2, 2011.

Under his leadership, the church celebrated its 450th anniversary in Florida, which included a pastoral letter and a major renovation of the Cathedral Basilica of St. Augustine.

Bishop Estévez also has promoted the Shrine of Our Lady of Leche as a national shrine, appointed a chaplain and is

overseeing plans for renovations and enhancements to the site. A second shrine was built in High Springs, the Santa Fe Shrine of Our Lady of La Leche, to make the Marian devotion more accessible to Catholics living in the western counties of the diocese.

Under his leadership, four missions have been established: Christ the Good Shepherd Mission, Trenton; St. Andrew Chapel, Cedar Key; St. Francis of Assisi Mission, Yulee; and St. John Paul II Mission, Nocatee. He also has established five diocesan early learning centers.

To create a culture of the Eucharist in the diocese, Bishop Estévez hosts an annual Eucharistic Congress that attracts some of the most prominent speakers in the country and thousands from the faith community in Florida and neighboring states.

Bishop Estévez also has been a strong advocate of religious freedom and the sanctity of human life and marriage. He is also a tireless advocate for the abolition of the death penalty in Florida.

He has reached out to people of all cultures in the diocese, especially Hispanics, initiating Spanish content in the diocesan magazine, establishing a live weekly radio Mass and

program, *La Voz de Emmanuel*, and tripling the number of Hispanic priests.

He has been active ecumenically, inviting the bishops of various denominations to an interfaith vespers service in 2014 at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Augustine.

Vocations, among men and women, have grown considerably in the diocese during his tenure.

During listening sessions, Bishop Estévez has held throughout the diocese on two occasions; he has developed a new strategic mission for the diocese, calling all Catholics to deepen their understanding of the gospel so that they can become missionary disciples.



Bishop Felipe Estévez at the 450th anniversary of St. Augustine in 2015.



On April 27, 2011, at a news conference, Bishop Estévez was announced the tenth bishop of St. Augustine. He is joined by Bishop Víctor Galeone, left, and Bishop John Snyder, right.