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## Bridge Builder

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# University of Dayton, Ohio (url: <http://www.udayton.edu/index.php>)



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**06.07.2013 | Catholic, Faculty**

A University of Dayton theologian and former U.S. ambassador to the Vatican received a national honor from an organization for Hispanic Catholic theologians.

The Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians of the United States awarded the Virgilio Elizondo Award for Distinguished Achievement in Theology to Miguel Díaz on June 4 in Miami, Fla. The academy grants the award to an individual for "distinguished achievement in theology, in keeping with the mission of the Academy."

"I am deeply humbled and honored to have received this award at the 25th anniversary colloquium and celebration of the Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians of the United States," Díaz said. "For 25 years, members of this academy have been listening to and walking with ordinary men and women of faith, especially Latino/a Catholic communities in this country. I am grateful for the friendships, support, and intellectual nourishment that I have received throughout the years. I am delighted to be welcomed home by this impressive think-tank of Catholic intellectuals, and look forward to making further contributions with them in service to the Church and society."

Díaz is the University Professor of Faith and Culture. Prior to coming to the University of Dayton, he served as U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See in Rome from 2009 to 2012, as the first theologian and first Hispanic to hold the post.

During his more than three years of service as ambassador, Díaz launched initiatives that advanced equitable and ethical development, care for the environment and conflict prevention. As a bridge-builder between government and civil society, Díaz was also a key leader in the U.S. State Department's development of the Working Group on Religion and Foreign Policy, the first systematic and comprehensive effort on the part of the State Department to take seriously the role of religion and religious actors in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy.

Prior to his appointment at the Vatican, Díaz taught theology at the College of Saint Benedict in St. Joseph, Minn., and Saint John's University in Collegeville, Minn. He was a board member of the Catholic Theological Society of America and is former president of the Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians of the United States.

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