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## Bridge Builder

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



## Bridge Builder

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On the eve of leaving his post as U.S. ambassador to the Holy See to join the faculty at the University of Dayton, Miguel Díaz vows to continue to build bridges in a divided world.

"At a time characterized with much polarization and fear of human differences, I strongly believe that abundant resources exist within Catholic intellectual traditions and the history of our American experience to meet the challenges we face as a nation and a global community," he said at a farewell ceremony at the State Department on Nov. 14.

Díaz will assume an endowed professorship at the University of Dayton, which offers the only doctoral program in the country on the study of the U.S. Catholic experience. He has been named University Professor of Faith and Culture. His wife, Marian, also a theologian, has joined the religious studies faculty as a lecturer and is teaching courses in scripture.

"As I embrace new professional responsibilities, I seek to relate my love for my Catholic faith and my love of country and will continue to build bridges of understanding among diverse peoples and communities."

A prominent Catholic theologian, Díaz was the first Hispanic to represent the United States at the Vatican. Last fall he helped launch the Religion and Foreign Policy Working Group of the Secretary of State's Strategic Dialogue with Civil Society. This groundbreaking initiative facilitates regular engagement with communities of faith.

"I have served at a post with a long history of building bridges," he said. "Since my arrival at the post three-and-a-half years ago, we have partnered with the Holy See and its associated institutions to defend human dignity, to promote greater understanding among peoples of differing religious and cultural traditions, and to seek greater cooperation between religious, civil and corporate leaders on a number of social challenges. Our 'Building Bridges' conferences, table-top conversations and panels have explored a wide range of issues facing the human family, including conflict resolution, care of the environment, economic justice, human trafficking and migration."

After a whirlwind week of media interviews and travel, Díaz reflected about the privilege of serving as the ninth U.S. ambassador to the Holy See.

"I have been quite fortunate to serve my country in Rome with an outstanding group of American Foreign Service officers as well as with a talented group of locally hired staff," he said. "I stand on their shoulders."

***For more information, contact Teri Rizvi at 937-229-3255 or [rizvi@udayton.edu](mailto:rizvi@udayton.edu).***