Rev. Shawn Conoboy '02, Ph.D., Appointed to Vatican Position

Alumni Spotlight

April 21, 2026

Congratulations are in order for Rev. Shawn Conoboy '02, Ph.D., whose distinguished career in priestly service has now reached the Vatican. Father Conoboy has accepted an appointment to the staff of the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, an honor that reflects both his scholarly accomplishments and his deep pastoral commitment. While Father Conoboy remains a priest of the Diocese of Youngstown, The Most Reverend David J. Bonnar has proudly released him for this special assignment, recognizing the significance of his contributions to the universal Church.

At the Dicastery, Father Conoboy will serve in the section that works with Bishops' Conferences around the world to identify and address the material needs of local churches. This work aligns perfectly with his lifelong dedication to pastoral ministry with the most vulnerable. The Dicastery's mission, to help fulfill Christ's promise that "all may have life to the full", encompasses crucial questions of economy, health, migration, ecology, and peace. Father Conoboy's responsibilities will include supporting action plans to resolve complex issues facing God's people globally.

The appointment represents a well-earned recognition of Father Conoboy's exceptional preparation and gifts. He earned his Ph.D. in Systematic Theology from Duquesne University in December 2021 and holds advanced theological degrees from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and the Teresianum, Pontifical Institute for Spirituality. Throughout his priesthood, which began with his ordination in 2006, Father Conoboy has distinguished himself through parish leadership, ecumenical dialogue, interfaith work, and service to migrant communities demonstrating the very integral human development the Dicastery promotes.

Bishop Bonnar expressed his enthusiasm for Father Conoboy's new chapter, “Father Conoboy’s appointment is a great honor, not only for him, but for the Diocese of Youngstown. Father Conoboy has so many gifts as a priest and theologian, and I am excited that he will now be using those gifts in his work with the Holy Father and the dicastery’s staff, led by Cardinal Michael Czerny, Sister Alessandra Smerilli, and Father Fabio Baggio. While we will miss him during his time of service to the Vatican, I give thanks that the Holy Spirit has opened up this new way for Father Conoboy to use his gifts for the good of the universal Church. Upon the completion of his duties, we will welcome him back with open arms." The Ave Maria community joins the Diocese of Youngstown in celebrating this remarkable achievement by one of our own.

Read online for photos and videos:

https://alumni.avemaria.edu/news/rev-shawn-conoboy-02-ph-d-appointed-to-vatican-position-1776792116556