

Pope Francis Appoints First African American Cardinal

On Sunday, October 25, 2020, **Pope Francis** announced that **Wilton Gregory**, Archbishop of Washington and an architect of the U.S. Roman Catholic Church's zero-tolerance policy in response to its clerical sexual abuse crisis, would be elevated to **Cardinal**, making him the first **African-American** to hold such a position.



The elevation of Archbishop Gregory, the first **American** named as a cardinal since **2016**, comes as demonstrations for racial justice and debates over how to address the legacy of slavery and racism have dramatically shifted the conversation about race in the United States. In recent months, Archbishop Gregory has urged the church's leaders to improve race relations, recalling his time as an auxiliary bishop in the Archdiocese of Chicago, and how important it was for young Black Catholics to see a bishop who looked like them.

“Ours is the task and the privilege of advancing the goals that were so eloquently expressed 57 years ago by such distinguished voices on that day,” Archbishop Gregory said in August, during a Mass commemorating the 57th anniversary of the March on Washington. “Men and women, young and old, people of every racial and ethnic background are needed in this effort.”

He added: “We are at a pivotal juncture in our country’s struggle for racial justice and national harmony.”

It is important to note that Archbishop Gregory’s installation will occur on **November 28, 2020** during **Black Catholic History Month**.