NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

# Presidential delegation hosts new cardinals

John Thavis  Catholic News Service  | Nov. 20, 2010

**ROME** -- The color was red, the occasion was festive and political issues were momentarily set aside.

Miguel Diaz, the U.S. ambassador to the Vatican, hosted two new U.S. cardinals and other leading Americans at a reception at his residence in Rome. The crowded event Nov. 19 came on the eve of the consistory when Pope Benedict handed red hats to Cardinal Raymond L. Burke, Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl and 22 others from around the world.

Cardinal Burke, who heads the Vatican's top tribunal, has been a sharp critic of some of the Obama administration's policies on life and family issues, particularly abortion. In 2009, he warned that President Obama could be an "agent of death."

But at Diaz' reception, the soon-to-be cardinal was all smiles. He thanked Diaz for the invitation, posed for photos and made a quick round of handshaking before departing for dinner with relatives.

Cardinal Wuerl, the archbishop of Washington, arrived soon afterward. He too has been a public presence on pro-life issues, emphasizing the need to better educate the Catholic faithful on the church's teaching and the reasons behind it.

In a toast praising the experience and service of the two new cardinals, Diaz said the get-together was a "celebration of U.S. achievements" and an occasion to promote dialogue. He underlined the fact that for the first time the White House had sent a presidential delegation to a consistory.

"This shows the president's tremendous desire to build bridges," he told reporters.

Diaz was one of the delegation's two members. The other was Daniel M. Rooney, the U.S. ambassador to Ireland and owner of the Pittsburgh Steelers; he is a friend of Cardinal Wuerl, who is a native of Pittsburgh and served as bishop there for 18 years.

Several other U.S. cardinals attended the reception, along with political figures like Republican National Committee Chairman Michael Steele -- a sign of the delegation's bridge-building and bridge-repairing effort, Diaz said.

"We must come together as a human family, and this mission is situated precisely to do some of this. You know, if we can't do this as a church and a society, we have big issues ahead of us," he said.

**Source URL (retrieved on *07/23/2014 - 13:49*):** http://ncronline.org/news/vatican/presidential-delegation-hosts-new-cardinals