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Los Angeles' recently criticized Mahony to help elect new pope

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Benedict Resigns

Cardinal Roger Mahony, the retired archbishop of Los Angeles who was been publicly disgraced in past weeks over his handling of priests accused of sex abuse in the 1980s, has confirmed he will be voting to choose the next pope.

Writing in a statement posted to the Los Angeles archdiocese's website, Mahony recalls that he took place in the 2005 conclave that selected Pope Benedict.

"I look forward to traveling to Rome soon to help thank Pope Benedict XVI for his gifted service to the Church, and to participate in the Conclave to elect his successor," writes [1] Mahony.

At 76 years of age, Mahony is one of 118 cardinals of the Roman Catholic church currently able to vote for the next pope. Cardinals are prohibited from voting once they reach the age of 80.

Mahony's successor, Archbishop Jose Gomez, has not yet been named a cardinal and as such is not able to vote for the next pontiff.

Gomez grabbed headlines Jan. 31 when he announced Mahony would "no longer have any administrative or public duties" in the Los Angeles archdiocese because [2] of his shielding of priests accused of sex abuse in the 1980s.

Gomez's announcement came as the archdiocese released some 12,000 church files detailing Mahony's actions in those cases as part of a court order.

Mahony responded Feb. 1, saying Gomez had "not once" raised the issue with him.

Made a cardinal in 1991, Mahony retired as Los Angeles' archbishop in 2011, when Gomez succeeded him.

In a separate statement Monday, Gomez thanked God "for the love and witness of Pope Benedict XVI."

"Let us entrust him to our Blessed Mother Mary and pray that he will continue to have joy and peace and many more years for prayer and reflection," wrote [3] Gomez.

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