

Pope names two Americans among 24 new cardinals

by [Francis X. Rocca](#)

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VATICAN CITY (RNS) Two American archbishops, one serving in Rome and the other in Washington, D.C., will be granted a cardinal's red hat in a ceremony at the Vatican next month, Pope Benedict XVI announced on Wednesday (Oct. 20).

Washington Archbishop Donald W. Wuerl and Archbishop Raymond L. Burke, who heads the Vatican's supreme court, were the only American names on a list of 24 men whom Benedict will admit to the College of Cardinals on Nov. 20.

Twenty of the new cardinals, including Wuerl and Burke, are under the age of 80, and thus will be eligible to vote for the next pope.

Wuerl and Burke will join 11 other Americans among the 121 cardinals who are eligible to participate in a papal election; six other retired cardinals from the U.S. lost their voting rights when they turned 80.

Several U.S. prelates who are likely to be named cardinals -- including the archbishops of Baltimore, New York and Los Angeles -- will have to wait because their retired predecessors haven't yet reached 80 years old. Benedict does not allow more than one cardinal elector from any given diocese.

Wuerl, 69, has been archbishop of Washington since 2006, following nearly two decades as bishop of Pittsburgh.

Relatively low-key in his approach to some politically loaded issues, Wuerl resisted calls to deny Communion to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a Catholic, because of her support for abortion rights.

But Wuerl stepped into controversy earlier this year when the District of Columbia legalized same-sex marriage; Wuerl ended some social service contracts with the city, and said new employees at Catholic Charities would not receive spousal benefits, rather than comply with the city's anti-discrimination laws.

The 62-year old Burke served as archbishop of St. Louis until 2008, when the pope named him head of the Apostolic Signature, the Vatican's highest court.

Burke is known as an outspoken critic of Catholic politicians and institutions that stray from church teaching. In 2004, he told Democratic presidential nominee Sen. John Kerry, a Catholic, that he could not receive Communion in St. Louis because of his support of abortion rights.

Last year, Burke was the highest Vatican official to criticize the controversial decision by the University of Notre Dame to grant President Obama an honorary degree. Burke said the honor was inappropriate because of Obama's support for abortion rights and embryonic stem-cell research.