

# *The Most Reverend Mario Alberto Avilés C.O.*

## **Faith, Values at Home Shaped New Bishop of Corpus Christi**

January 23, 2026 by Brenda Nettles-Rioja



Before he was a priest or a bishop, Mario Alberto Avilés grew up learning the importance of family and faith. The youngest of five children, he was instilled with a devotion to Our Blessed Mother Mary by his mother and grandmother; the example of his parents taught him the meaning of commitment.

"It's because of my family that I am here," he said, "because of the example of my parents' commitment to each other for so many years." "Mis viejitos," he affectionately calls them. The

son of Rafael and María Guadalupe Avilés, he was born in Mexico City on Sept. 16, 1969. Bishop Avilés' parents have been married for more than 70 years. On their golden wedding anniversary in

2005, their youngest son officiated the renewal of their wedding vows. One year later, in 2006, he also officiated at his grandparents' 75th wedding anniversary. Most recently, on August 13, 2025, he again celebrated his parents' anniversary, marking more than seven decades of marriage.



*Fr. Mario Avilés giving communion to his parents on their 50th wedding anniversary.*

"It was a very special moment for me," he said. "I was a product of that love and commitment they made 70 years ago in 1955." His sister Rocio Avilés remembers that day. "We never imagined that my brother would celebrate the Mass for my parents' 50th anniversary at the same church (Parroquia de San Vicente Ferrer) where they were married in Mexico City, at the same time, 1 pm on August 13.

Rocio, 13 years older than her brother, watched over him as a second mother. She said that while her brother may have been the youngest, he was always mature for his age and made the right decisions.

"He is a wonderful brother, a wonderful son," she said. "He has a big heart."

She, too, credits their parents' example for their strong family ties. "Our parents always emphasized that we should be close."

When Bishop Avilés decided to enter the seminary of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri in 1986, he spoke to his parents and to each of his siblings. "We all supported him," said his sister. "We knew God had marked his path for him."

She remembers the advice she gave him, telling him the Church needed priests who worried about the young. She also told him to prepare himself well and not to remain seated in the sacristy.

"We have been blessed by God," she said. "We are all so happy he was named a bishop." His father, Rafael Avilés Hernández, said words could not express the emotion he felt as his son was elevated to the office of a bishop. "First, I am grateful to God."

"From the moment he made his decision (to enter the priesthood), we have always been at his side." "To think, we have a new fisher of men," he added. "Principally, as a son, I wish him all the best," he said. "He has responded to everything a human being should learn and then apply. Above all, share it with others in the best way possible."

Rafael Avilés said many people helped his son along the way as he grew up in Mexico City. Bishop Avilés' mother said she never imagined her son would become a bishop. She shared her husband's joy and gratefulness to God. An added joy, she said, was having all her family united for the Ordination Mass for "*el pequeño de la familia*". She said, surely God has marked his path.

When Avilés was ordained a priest almost 28 years ago on July 21, 1998, at the Basilica of Our Lady of San Juan del Valle – National Shrine, both his parents took up the gifts, the bread and wine, to the altar.



As a little boy with his mother.

On February 22, 2018, his parents again brought up the gifts, this time for his ordination as a bishop. "It was truly a blessing," said Bishop Avilés, "and I am thankful to the Lord for this opportunity of having my parents at my episcopal ordination."

Although he does not see his parents in Mexico City as often as he would like, Bishop Avilés keeps in close contact with them. Family, he said, is important. "That is why in my coat of arms I included my family crest."

Bishop Avilés recalled several memories of home and living with his family. "We experienced good times and bad times and conflicts and discussions, but definitely a family where faithfulness was present. Faithfulness to the sacrament of marriage."

"My parents were always there for us," he said. "We were not a well-off family," he said, but the family spent time together either in the day-to-day of life or celebrating birthdays and other special occasions. Even a trip to the park could feel like a vacation. "It was a very normal family," said Bishop Avilés, "but a family that always showed me and my brothers and my sister, that faithfulness to the Lord, that commitment of staying together and being an example and a help to each other."



On the day of his Priestly Ordination. July 21, 1998.

Bishop Avilés shared that his mother, while raising four sons and one daughter, assigned chores to everyone at home. "There was no difference between the girls and the boys," he said, when it came to chores, it was part of being a family." She even taught the boys how to do laundry and cook.

However, he said not everyone was successful in the kitchen, as it is not one of his strengths. But for a taste of home, the *sopa de fideo* brings back memories.

Living in Mexico City, his sister Rocio Avilés said, "We want him to know the entire family is with him, and we wish him the best. May he continue to follow the path God has entrusted to him."