

Bishop Callahan

Installation and Ordination as Auxiliary Bishop
Archdiocese of Milwaukee
December 21, 2007



Praised be Jesus Christ!

This prayer, one way or another, has been a part of my life, almost everyday of my life, for as long as I can remember. And, yes, I learned it in Kindergarten! "Praised be Jesus Christ," every time a priest or a Sister walked into our grade school classrooms at St. Mary's in Chicago. "Laudetur, Jesus Christus," every time a priest entered the classroom at St. Mary's Preparatory Seminary high school in Crystal Lake, Illinois.

Varying forms of English and Latin used by diocesan, Jesuit; and Basilian, priests in' theology at St. Mike's in Toronto; and, most recently, "sia lodato Gesu Christo," booming in Italian at the Pontifical North American College in Rome!

Recently, however, working as a spiritual director with men studying for the priesthood, the praise and honor of Jesus Christ has grown deeper in my heart and soul. The deeper I went with them into their love for Our Lord, the stronger and deeper I found mine to be. And I love Jesus Christ and His Church. Everyday, I realize more and more what a wonderful gift the priesthood is-that I can be formed more perfectly into the Heart of Jesus Christ, the Head and the Shepherd of the Church.

So, on the feast of St. Teresa of Avila, Monday, 15 October, when I was summoned to the residence of the Prefect for the Congregation of Bishops who told me that His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI, had chosen me to serve Archbishop Dolan and the Archdiocese of Milwaukee as an auxiliary Bishop, my head began to spin and has been whirling ever since. There was, of course, first an overwhelming sense of gratitude and fidelity to the Pope; and I am profoundly and deeply grateful to His Holiness for his prayerful confidence and this honor, for me personally, and for my family, for my Religious Community of the Conventual Franciscans, and for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.

I have prayed about this moment. I have reflected for the past months to find some way of standing before you peacefully, that I might share my feelings as I assume this ministry. I am not a great scholar, nor theological educator. I am not a whiz kid fund raiser or inside trader. I am not the outsider come to "fix things;" and I am still trying to work out allegiances to NFL teams. Thank goodness I can, from time to time, enjoy a lite beer from Miller!

What I am, however, and what I have found much peace in being, is a simple parish priest. I have experienced some blessings in that area of my life. I have been blessed to serve the People of God in the Diocese of Peoria under the direction, guidance, and leadership of Archbishop John Joseph Myers, who does me the great honor of his presence and shares the rich blessings of the apostolic consecration bestowed upon me today.

I have experienced great joy and satisfaction in priestly ministry here in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Working with priests and leaders of the community, not only in restoring the monumental Basilica of St. Josaphat, but through it, opening the doors to Christ and His People.

One of the great images of St. Francis of Assisi that has always appealed to me, and has also been active in my priestly life, is that moment of his conversion when Francis heard and acted upon the voice of the Lord who told him to rebuild His Church, which was falling into ruin. Francis worked with bricks and mortar like we did on Sixth and Lincoln, but he also built with living stones the people of God, uniting and bridging, men and women - the Holy Church of God! We did that, too

My years as a parish priest were blessed first by being ordained in Milwaukee by Archbishop William Edward Cousins. I witnessed the Liturgy of the ordination and consecration of Archbishop Rembert Weakland and prayed with him as he assumed his episcopal ministry for the Faithful here. Returning some years later, I appreciated his assistance and prayers for my ministry.

With joy and enthusiasm I shared in the ceremonies in this Cathedral when Archbishop Timothy Michael Dolan was installed as our current Archbishop. It is to him, in front of all of you, that I once again dedicate myself to the love of Jesus Christ and His Church, my total and complete loyalty and fidelity to the Vicar of Christ, His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI, and my humble service and loyalty, my respect and my friendship, to the Archbishop to be his helper and auxiliary bishop, serving with Bishop Sklba, for the fraternity of the priesthood and for the upbuilding of God's People in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and Southeastern Wisconsin.

Praised be Jesus Christ!