

Installation Mass  
Bishop Richard Pates  
Ninth Bishop of Des Moines  
May 29, 2008

INTRODUCTION

Archbishop Sambini, Archbishops Flynn, Hanus, Nienstedt, Curtiss and Burke, brother Bishops and priests, deacons, religious, family, friends and my fellow Sisters and Brothers of the Church of Des Moines.

It is a great consolation to me that I come to the Church of Des Moines as its ninth Bishop. Such lengthy genealogy provides perspective. My predecessor bishops, each in his unique way, has made a difference. Even if I should blow it badly, the Diocese will go on. The 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> bishops will just have to work a little harder.

In reflecting on the legacy I inherit, I am particularly aware of the ministry of Bishop Joseph Charron. For 13 years he embodied the role of servant – gentle, kind, intelligent, compassionate and collaborative. He was always faithful to the challenge of the Gospel, conveying without compromise, the expectation of conversion to the Way of the Lord Jesus. Paradoxically, Bishop Charron, evidence of your success is demonstrated by how well Monsignor Orr, the Diocesan Administrator, along with the Diocesan staff have done since you retired. Bishop Charron, Monsignor Orr, capable staff – this community owes all of you an enormous debt of gratitude. Thank-you!

The Church of Des Moines is not an isolated entity but is united with the world-wide community of believers which rests on the foundation of Peter, the rock active in his successor, Pope Benedict XVI, whom Archbishop Pietro Sambini, Apostolic Nuncio in the United States, represents today.

Insofar as Pope Benedict is the 265<sup>th</sup> successor of the Apostle Peter, he offers even greater perspective. Moreover, we are blessed with the inspiring leadership of Benedict XVI so recently experienced in his pastoral visit to the United States. Archbishop Sambini, if you would be so kind, convey to the Holy Father gratitude for the privilege he has accorded me in appointing me to shepherd the Church of Des Moines. We in Des Moines will be faithful to the unity Jesus prayed for.

Having worked for two of your predecessors, Archbishop Sambini, I value the personal qualities and dedication you bring to your office. My brother bishops and others who interact with you are encouraged by your warmth, friendliness and vision, a vision especially nurtured by your service in the Holy Land through which you highlight the incarnation – the marvel that the Son of God walked among us.

Cementing the relationship with the Church of Rome was the 1979 visit of Pope John Paul II to Des Moines and the Living History Farms. This visit paid tribute to America's heartland, rich quality of life and rural traditions. The altar, ambo and other altar furniture from the Papal Eucharistic celebration are being used today. They represent the timeless impact of that historic moment.

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Lending additional reason for hope as I enter into this new ministry is the treasured love and support I have received from my family, friends and from my 33 years of pastoral ministry in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

My Mother and Father through their witness passed on the gift of faith in love. I contend, knowing that I have serious competition from all of you, that when it comes to parents, they were the best. I can feel their spirit and presence today. My brother, Hugh, nephew and niece, Michael and Michelle are here with other family and friends. All are generous to a fault in their commitment and support. My heart reaches out in thanks to all of you.

My ministry in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis and its satisfaction is represented in the mentoring and relationship I enjoyed with Archbishop Harry Flynn. His spirituality, shepherd's heart and courageous advocacy of social justice set the standard for Episcopal ministry in Minnesota, North and South Dakota.

My prayer will continue to be with you, Archbishop Nienstedt, and all the priests, deacons, religious, seminarians, and faithful of the great Archdiocese of St Paul and Minneapolis. It was a gift of Providence to experience Church with you.