*That they may have life*by Bishop Chad W. Zielinski

*The Glorification of God*

As a priest of 26 years, I have had the humble honor and blessing of offering the Holy Mass on countless occasions, beginning with the good people of God in my home parish of St. Bernard of Clairvaux in Alpena, Mich., following my priestly ordination on June 8, 1996, to celebrating Mass for our uniformed military personnel throughout the USA while on a mountain top during a deployment to Afghanistan, and most recently serving as the bishop in the villages along the Yukon River leading up the Bering Sea Coast to the most western parish in the United States on the Island of Little Diomede, 2.4 miles from Russia. All this movement of God’s grace has led me to a most splendid Glorification of God in the celebration of my Installation Mass in the Diocese of New Ulm on Sept. 27, 2022.

As bishops, priests, deacons, friends, family, and faithful of God from near and far literally stepped into St. Mary’s Church in Sleepy Eye, one’s soul was pulled heavenward by the transcendent beauty of the sacred space. This magnificent edifice solely dedicated to the glorification of God united people from 15 counties in the south and west central plains of Minnesota for a single purpose: to glorify God in the celebration of the Holy Mass.

Following the celebration of the Mass of Installation, I heard numerous comments from chancery staff, faithful gathered from all corners of the diocese, family, priests, and brother bishops: “That was the most beautiful Mass I attended;” “The music was extraordinary - the best I have heard;” “This was extremely well organized and I could see many hands contributed to this beautiful celebration;” “I have never seen so many bishops, priests, sisters, deacons, people gathered for the most beautiful Mass I have ever attended;” “I got off the combine to drive all the way here, and it was certainly worth it,” “Bishop, thanks for letting me serve this Mass – it was an honor.”

From a brother bishop: “Chad, this Installation Mass was extraordinarily beautiful with a lot of hard work by many people.”

These varied comments of each person’s participation in the Sacred Liturgy united all of us from near and far into a most joyous mystical Body of Christ, offering praise to the Father for the gift of his Son in the Holy Eucharist.

In my homily, I began by referencing the diocesan prayer for a new bishop. For almost two years, the good people of God of the diocese have hounded Heaven in asking God for a pastor who would lead them in the way of holiness. To this day, those words echo loudly in my heart and soul. They are a constant reminder that the faithful of God thirst for holiness and are united in heart and mind with their shepherd. They want to walk the way of holiness daily, living out their Catholic faith. This invitation is profoundly humbling and filled with great joy.

I also invited the faithful of the diocese to join me in a pastoral approach to entering into the Eucharistic Revival process: “Hearing God, handing him your heart, and having hope!” Since entering the Eucharistic Revival process that started on Corpus Christi Sunday, June 16, we have lived in a world filled with noise. We need to slow down and listen to God speak to us through his Sacred Word, prayer, and adoring him in the Holy Eucharist at adoration. This encounter with His grace will move us to an act of surrendering our hearts to him. As individuals, families, parishes, and a diocese, we will “go into the deep” with Jesus to encounter healing and transformation in celebrating the Holy Mass. Let us go forth into the world as children of the light filled with “renewed hope.”

Following the celebration of the Installation Mass, I met numerous faithful from various parts of the diocese. It was great to hear personal stories, those asking for prayers for a loved one, inviting me to visit their parish and home, and so many thanking me for my “yes” to serve as the bishop. The most touching moment as I greeted folks was a little girl of about seven years of age coming up to me and giving me a big hug, and simply saying, “I am so happy you are our bishop.”

Although it is with great joy and honor that I serve you, the faithful of this diocese, it is not so much my “yes” to Pope Francis to serve as the bishop of New Ulm but our hearts and minds united in our Catholic faith together saying “yes” to God.

**My work begins**

The weeks following the Installation Mass have launched me into a very busy schedule. I have traveled to a few communities to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation. During the months of preparation leading up to the Confirmation Mass, candidates are asked to write a letter to the bishop explaining their desire to be confirmed. Their heartfelt words deeply touched me.

I was able to meet with each confirmation group for a short chat before the Mass. Normally, I have found high school youth rather chatty, but they were silent, their gaze riveted on me. So, to avoid putting them on the spot, I shared what I collectively heard in their letters: you are thankful to your parents for being raised Catholic, your faith is important to you, you see the grace of the Sacrament of Confirmation as drawing closer to God, you want to grow in holiness, and you believe the world is need of healing and Jesus has something better to offer.

In silence, they all vigorously nodded in agreement throughout my comments.

What an absolute honor and joy to walk on the sacred ground of the lives of these young people – and I told them these exact words – “this brings me great hope!”

As I drive down the roads across the prairie of the Lord’s amassed loveliness, I have to confess to you and Almighty God, watching the morning sun glisten off the golden hue of the corn being harvested, I am a very blessed man. I’ve got it good!

I am so happy and honored to serve you as your shepherd. Together we join our prayers in saying “yes” to Jesus in our walk of faith to grow in holiness.