TO: The priests, deacons, women religious, diocesan and parish staff, and all parishioners from the Archdiocese of Dubuque

DATE: June 5, 2023

Interim News
by
Bishop Richard Pates

I am celebrating the two-month mark of serving as Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese. My first comment is one of heartfelt gratitude for the welcome that has been extended to me on all fronts. Secondly, every evidence is that this faith community has deep roots and on that basis is making Jesus Christ known and loved in our time and place.

The season calls for much activity and celebrations. Clarke University and Loras College experienced beautiful graduation ceremonies, which I attended. It is always a thrill to be caught up in the enthusiasm and appropriate sense of accomplishment expressed in these events which are further enhanced by the Catholic character of the schools. Congratulations are also extended to all of the Mount Mercy University graduates.

My travels have crisscrossed the expansive Archdiocese. As a bishop, I have croiser and mitre, will travel, and confirm! The Sacrament of Confirmation is usually the last of the sacraments of initiation to be conferred in our contemporary sacramental context. I have found the young people basically from the ages of 13-17 to be excited and well prepared. Special recognition is due to the Confirmation Coordinators, the Confirmation sponsors, parents and priests. Our personal investment in the further development of these young people is so essential to their long-term involvement in the Church. Especially is this so in these days of many challenges to faith practice.

The highlight of these two months has been the ordination of a “transitional” deacon, Greg Lambert, and two priests, Casey Flack and Jeff Frieden, for the Archdiocese. The three are a credit to their families and seminary formation. They will be a source of inspiration and consolation especially as celebrants of the Sacraments. Welcome Greg, Casey & Jeff! The Archdiocese is much blessed.

During these days, I have also been introduced to the Catholic schools, the Catholic Foundation, Catholic Charities, and Pastoral Planning and Leadership Development among other noteworthy undertakings which express the depth of our mission. One “fun” travel experience was a round-
trip flight on “Gibbs Air” between Dubuque and Ames, piloted by Father Phil Gibbs of Resurrection Parish. Father navigated the turbulence well and we landed “on a bed of feathers”, each time. We attended the funeral of Father John Herzog at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Ames. In his lifetime, Father Herzog, shared the distinction of a “priest pilot” with several confreres.

About a year or so ago, along with family, friends, and parishioners, planning began for a pilgrimage to Florence & Rome which came to pass on May 3rd to 12th. The group bonded well, we were blessed with superb weather, experienced expected fatigue from endless sightseeing and of course, could not get enough of the Italian cuisine. At the Papal Audience on May 10th, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to greet Pope Francis, as the attached photo attests. Although hindered in mobility, the Holy Father was in high spirits. He asked that all of us in the Archdiocese pray for him. I was happy to assure him that we would fulfill his request.

As we anticipate the future, three events are on the docket:

1. The semi-annual meeting of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, June 14-16th in Orlando, Florida.
3. Saturday, June 24th, the ordination of nine permanent deacon candidates at the Cathedral of St. Raphael. The permanent diaconate in the Archdiocese currently consists of 115 active deacons and 23 retired. Under the leadership of Deacon John Stierman, Director of the Permanent Diaconate, the deacon community provides dynamic service in our parishes and in outreach to those in need. The contemporary deacon is referred to as “An Icon of Christ the Servant”.

![Photo of Pope Francis and Bishop Richard Pates](image-url)
The most significant future news is the naming of the 11th Archbishop / 13th Bishop of Dubuque. Everywhere I go appreciation for and recognition of the outstanding service of Archbishop Michael Jackels continues to be expressed.

At the same time, curiosity regarding the announcement of the new Archbishop is mounting. The best response is one of prayer for that individual. In this vein, a prayer has been created.

**A Prayer as We Await a New Archbishop**

O God, you send your Son,
Our Lord Jesus, as priest, prophet, and king.
We thank you for your abundant blessings bestowed upon our Archdiocese, and thank you for the ministry of Archbishop Jackels.

In your grace, send us a bishop like Jesus:
a priest of deep and true prayer,
a teacher with a loving heart and firm resolve,
and a shepherd of joy and peace,
who desires above all to do Your will.
We ask this through Christ, Our Lord.

Amen.

It is asked in the spirit of unity that this prayer be recited at the conclusion at each prayer of the faithful and that all of us recite the prayer individually when the opportunity presents itself.

Heartfelt thanks are extended to Deacon John Robbins, Director of Communications, and Father Greg Bahl, Director of Worship, who assisted with the composition and distribution of the prayer.

Meanwhile, we travel on as the Church of Dubuque deeply aware of God’s past favors now enjoys great confidence that these favors are far from exhausted.