REMARKS OF ARCHBISHOP EDWIN F. O'BRIEN

August 29, 2011

Baltimore, Maryland

Good morning.

Before I begin, I'd like to offer our prayers for those who were impacted by the hurricane this weekend, especially those who are without electricity and who suffered physical harm or property damage...we give thanks to God that it was not worse.

On Thursday, August 18, I submitted the following letter to our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI:

Your Holiness,

With deep gratitude do I accept your nomination of me to serve as Grand Master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. I pray that I will carry out the will of God and that of Your Holiness in preserving the Faith and defending the sacred places in the Holy Land.

It has been a singular privilege to serve as Archbishop of Baltimore. It is with a heavy heart that I will be departing the Premier See of the United States, but I do so out of complete obedience to Your Holiness.

Please be assured of my prayers for and loyalty to the Successor of Peter.

Respectfully, Edwin F. O'Brien, Archbishop of Baltimore

As the letter states, the Pope has appointed me Grand Master of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, an ancient lay institution of the Vatican charged with the task of providing for the needs of the Latin Partiarchate of Jerusalem—the Church in the Holy Land and all the activities and initiatives which are necessary to support our Christian presence there.

Concurrent with my appointment as grand master, the Holy Father has named me Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, a title that gives me many of the same duties as Archbishop. I am grateful to the Pope for allowing me to serve in this dual role until my successor is named, which will ensure that the many important initiatives underway in the Archdiocese continue without interruption, even as I begin serving the Church in my new role.

News of this appointment came as a shock to me and I am still adjusting to the reality that effective today I am no longer the Archbishop of Baltimore. Until learning very recently of my appointment as Grand Master of the Holy Sepulchre, I was prepared and eager to serve out the remainder of my episcopacy as

Archbishop of Baltimore, a title I have been honored to hold and a role in which I have been blessed to serve.

My nearly-four years as the spiritual leader of this Premier See in the United States has been among the most challenging and rewarding years of my priestly ministry.

They have certainly not been without their challenges and I regret that I will be unable to see to completion the works that have begun and those which I had planned for the remainder of my years here.

While the thought of leaving Baltimore--which I have come to think of as a permanent and welcoming home—saddens me, the news underscores the fact that the Church is built and ordered on Christ alone.

I take comfort in knowing that there are many good and committed people--both here at the Catholic Center and in our parishes and schools—who will continue to advance the Church and her mission unfettered.

I especially wish to thank my brother priests for their faithful and dedicated service, for their fraternal love and for the gift of their priestly ministry. I am in

awe of their Christ-like witness in every corner of this Archdiocese and am greatly comforted by their capable service during this time of transition.

I also wish to thank the wonderful Catholic Center staff for their self-less work, loyalty and many acts of kindness. I'd especially like to thank Bishops Mitch Rozanski and Denis Madden; Vicar General, Rick Woy and many others too numerous to name and whom I hope to personally thank in the days ahead.

To collaborate closely with our Holy Father in keeping the faith alive in the Holy Land as I have been asked to do is a great challenge and privilege. The land in which Christ walked, preached, suffered, died and rose again will always be sacred to Christians and we must do all we can to preserve the holiness of that land.

I humbly ask each of you to remember me in your prayers and I assure you that the Archdiocese of Baltimore and all those who call this home will always have a special claim on my prayers and my love.