

Bishop Kevin Farrell installed as bishop of Dallas Diocese

DALLAS - Bishop Kevin J. Farrell was installed May 1 as the seventh bishop of the Diocese of Dallas during a Mass at the Cathedral Shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe attended by an overflow crowd of more than 2,000 people.

The two-hour Mass was concelebrated by archbishops, bishops and priests from Texas and from around the United States. They included Washington Archbishop Donald W. Wuerl and Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick, retired archbishop of Washington. Archbishop Pietro Sambi, apostolic nuncio to the U.S., read the apostolic mandate appointing Bishop Farrell to Dallas.

Bishop Brian Farrell, who is secretary of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the brother of Bishop Kevin Farrell, also concelebrated the Mass.

Dallas' new bishop, who was an auxiliary bishop in Washington for five years, was led to the cathedra, the bishop's chair, by Archbishop Sambi and Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of San Antonio. He was presented with his crosier, the sign of his pastoral office, and welcomed by his predecessor, retired Bishop Charles V. Grahmann of Dallas.

Hours before the Mass began, the cathedral was packed with an exuberant crowd. Many attendees were dressed in colorful ethnic or religious costumes reflecting the diocese's cultural diversity.

"This is a momentous opportunity," said Tommy Baril, a member of St. Jude Parish in Allen. "I've never had a chance to watch a bishop be installed. I'm just amazed at the sight in this cathedral of how many special people are part of this diocese - the religious, the deacons, the priests, the seminarians, the laity."

In his homily, Bishop Farrell noted that it was the feast of St. Joseph the Worker, guardian and protector of the Holy Family.

“In the Catholic community, the bishop fulfills a task that has many similarities to St. Joseph’s,” he said, stressing that bishops are called to the challenging task of being guardians of the faith.

He said that one of his priorities will be to foster vocations and he hopes the whole Catholic community will participate in this effort.

At an evening vespers service April 30 with clergy of the Dallas Diocese, Bishop Farrell emphasized that he will rely heavily on his partnership with priests and deacons of the diocese.

Bishop Farrell said all share in his apostolic mission to lead and sanctify. He referred to the trying times recently faced by the Catholic Church across the country, especially in light of sexual abuse lawsuits, and thanked the clergy for their steadfastness and faithfulness to their ministry in the midst of such difficulties.

Elizabeth Hoag, a member of Christ the King Parish and leader of the Knights and Dames of Malta, described the installation of the new bishop as bittersweet.

“I will miss Bishop Grahmann very much. He’s been a wonderful bishop,” she told the Texas Catholic, Dallas’ diocesan newspaper. “At the same time, I welcome Bishop Farrell with open arms. The people of Dallas are friendly and they, too, will welcome him with open arms.”

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Contributing to this story was Anna Macias.