

Episcopal Ordination of Bishops Parker and Brennan

I. Introduction

A. What a day of joy and grace for the Archdiocese of Baltimore as we ordain two Auxiliary Bishops, Bishop Parker and Bishop Brennan. Archbishop Pierre, please convey to Pope Francis the deep gratitude of this entire community of faith for his pastoral love in appointing these bishops for service to this local Church. Cardinal Wuerl, thank you for sharing with us one of your finest priests, and for serving as co-consecrator. We look forward to praying and working with Bishop Brennan in the years ahead. Cardinal O'Brien, welcome home & thank you not only for serving as a co-consecrator, but indeed for the priestly example you set for Bishop Parker and for the opportunities of service which you opened up for him.

B. And while we're at it, I want to thank the bishops who are with us today and so many priests from Baltimore, Washington, and beyond. Thank you for being a part of this grace-filled moment in the life of the whole Church. What's more, we wouldn't even be here were it not for the families of the priests about to be ordained as bishops. Bishop Brennan, a warm welcome to your family and friends, including your brother, Paul, and his wife, Pat, who live in Frederick and Bishop Parker, a very warm welcome to your dear mother, Maureen, and to your immediate and extended family and your many friends.

C. Now to the task at hand. Let's get right to it by asking the most basic question a preacher can ask: What does the Word of God have to say about what we're doing here today? How do the Scripture readings just proclaimed shed light on this Episcopal Ordination and on the ministry which Bishop Parker and Bishop Brennan will soon exercise in the Person of Christ, Head and Shepherd of the Church?

II. Jeremiah 1:4-9: Wisdom and Youthfulness in

Mission

A. Well, let's start with the first reading from the prophet, Jeremiah. In this reading, the Lord is bucking up the young Jeremiah. After all, this young man was being sent to speak boldly the Word of God to those who were much more experienced, savvy, and influential than he.

The Lord addresses Jeremiah's fears directly: "Say not I am too young. To whomever I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you shall speak..."

B. So, Bishop Brennan, let no one take advantage of your youth and inexperience! After all, you and I - we've been in ministry a mere forty years or so! . . . In light of Jeremiah's protest and the Lord's forthright response, here is my prayer for both of you, Adam and Mark: that with a wise, courageous, and youthful spirit you will daily "receive the Gospel and preach the word of God with patience and sound teaching" (Rite of Ordination).

III. Matthew 26:16-20: The Great Commission

A. What better lead-in to today's Gospel where we encounter the Risen Lord returning to Galilee as he prepares to ascend into heaven. There he gives the Apostles the Great Commission: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. . . ."

B. In a word, the Risen Lord commissioned his Apostles and their successors first and foremost to be evangelizers - those who proclaim and bear witness to the Gospel, those who encounter Jesus themselves in Word & Sacrament and lead others to do so; . . . shepherds whose chief concern, whose all-consuming passion, is to gather in truth and love all those entrusted to them into God's Eucharistic flock. A bishop must be deeply convinced that proclaiming and spreading the Gospel is not merely one of the Church's tasks among many. Rather, as Bl. Pope Paul VI taught us, proclaiming and spreading the Gospel is the Church's fundamental mission, a mission that shapes the Church's very identity.

C. Dear brothers, this is a task we dare not undertake by ourselves. When Jeremiah

set out on his mission, the Lord God said to him: “See, I place my words in your mouth!” When the Apostles received their commission, the Risen Lord Jesus said to them: “And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” What’s more, this is a task you will undertake in closest union with Our Holy Father, with me, and with the entire College of Bishops throughout the world. Further, it is your role to join with me in encouraging, guiding, and animating the evangelizing mission of priests and deacons in their service to God’s people, as well as the laity who are called to bring the Gospel into the world, while encouraging the witness of consecrated life in our midst. In the pastoral efforts underway in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, you will assist me in uniting all of us – laity, religious, and clergy, in advancing the mission of winning back those who no longer practice the faith and touching the hearts of those still searching for the truth and mercy of Christ. It is for us to deepen our awareness of the pastoral gifts and needs all around us, to grow in appreciation of the rich diversity of this local Church, and to create ties of friendship with the broader religious and civic community. And so, Adam and Mark, my brothers so soon to be ordained as bishops: in the grace and joy of the Gospel, let us resolve to be a light brightly visible!

IV. 1 Timothy 4:12-16: A ‘Post Ordination’ Homily

A. Finally, we turn to Paul’s words to Timothy which are, in effect, homily following his ‘ordination’ as bishop. For St. Paul was instructing Timothy on how to fulfill his mission to “Go ... and make disciples of all ... baptizing them ... and teaching them” First, he tells Timothy “to set an example for those who believe, in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity.” Just as Paul told the Corinthians, ‘Be imitators of me as I am of Christ,’ so here, Paul is telling Timothy to be so conformed to the Christ that he would be an example for God’s People to follow. And these words, dear brothers, are addressed to you. The greatest challenge in being a bishop is not administration or public relations; the greatest challenge is to be always and everywhere an example for God’s people. This is how you become witnesses of hope & authentic shepherds of the Lord’s flock.

B. Second, Paul tells Timothy, and by extension he tells you, Adam and Mark, to focus your attention on “reading, exhortation, and teaching.” Surely this means pondering the living Word of God in your hearts and growing in loving appreciation

for all that the Church believes and teaches. It means attending to your own life of prayer and suffusing it with God's Word, so that you will lovingly and energetically exhort others to follow Christ . . . as convincing evangelizers and loving stewards of the Church's sacramental life. Along with reading and exhortation there is teaching - "guarding the deposit of faith, entire and incorrupt," teaching that faith with integrity and purity of heart - not as rules to be followed but as words of spirit and life that transform us from the inside out and make us bearers of the peace of Christ in a world that is broken, a society that is divided, in communities in need of healing.

V. A Ministry of Service

A. So, dear brothers, as you are ordained to the fullness of the priesthood, ordained to preach, sanctify, and assist me in the governance of this local Church, I pray that you will embrace the office and ministry of bishop not as a source of honor or power or worldly advancement - but rather as an even deeper form of service to Christ and to his Church and to the poor and vulnerable - a service modeled on the One who laid down his life for the sake of us all.

B. In the power of the Holy Spirit, may your ministry as bishops be abundantly fruitful for the glory of God, the advancement of the Church's mission, and the salvation of souls. May God bless you both and keep you always in his love!