

POST-COMMUNION THANK YOU REMARKS
FOR THE MASS OF INSTALLATION
BY THE MOST REV. THOMAS JOHN PAPROCKI AS THE
NINTH BISHOP OF SPRINGFIELD IN ILLINOIS

Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
Feast of Ss. Thomas More and John Fisher
June 22, 2010

Eucharist is thanksgiving to God, and now that we have given thanks to God in this Eucharist, there are some people who also deserve our thanks for their role in this celebration.

First of all, I thank our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, for his confidence in entrusting me with the pastoral care of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois. A Catholic bishop acts in communion with the college of bishops and the head of that college, the Bishop of Rome, the successor of St. Peter. As I promised in taking the profession of faith and oath of fidelity when I became a bishop, I pledge to stay true to the Catholic faith and preserve communion with the Holy Father and my fellow Catholic bishops.

I am grateful to Archbishop Pietro Sambi, who, as Apostolic Nuncio to the United States of America, serves as the Holy Father's personal representative in our country. Archbishop Sambi's delegate at this Mass is Reverend Monsignor Marco Sprizzi, Secretary to the Apostolic Nuncio at the Vatican Embassy in Washington, D.C. Thank you, Monsignor Sprizzi, for your presence and for bringing with you the official Papal Letter of Appointment and reading the English translation of it at the beginning of this liturgy.

Once again, I express my profound gratitude to our Metropolitan Archbishop, His Eminence Francis Cardinal George,

for presiding at this Installation. I remember the very first time I traveled with you after you arrived as Archbishop of Chicago and I was serving as your Chancellor. We were seated together on a plane and you asked me what I was reading. I told you it was a book about Abraham Lincoln and that I liked reading books about him. From that point on you gave me a number of Abraham Lincoln books. I thank you for remembering my admiration for our sixteenth President and for whatever role you played in recommending me for this assignment close to Mr. Lincoln's home, his Presidential Library and Museum, and his final earthly resting place. Your Eminence, please know that you are always welcome here in our capital city.

In addition to Cardinal George, I am very pleased that His Eminence, Cardinal William Keeler, Archbishop Emeritus of Baltimore, is here today. I was privileged to work with Cardinal Keeler on a committee at the Synod for America in 1997 in Rome, and it means a lot to me that you have taken the time and made the trip to be with us today.

I am very grateful to all my brother bishops who are with us here today. In particular, I express not only *my* deep appreciation but that of the priests and people of the Diocese of Springfield to my immediate predecessor, Archbishop George Lucas. As I have been learning about the Diocese of Springfield since the day of my appointment, already I have come across matters having been handled very well and found myself saying, "Thank you, Archbishop Lucas!"

It is now over a year since Archbishop Lucas was appointed Archbishop of Omaha. However, the flock has not been left untended during that time. The Diocese of Springfield for the past twelve months has been abundantly blessed to have been in the very capable hands of the Diocesan Administrator, Monsignor Carl Kemme. Monsignor Kemme had served as Vicar General prior to Archbishop Lucas' transfer to Omaha. When the See is vacant, the Vicar General's office ceases, but the diocesan College of Consultors acted very wisely in choosing Monsignor Kemme to be the Diocesan Administrator. Now that he has successfully finished that task, as my first official act as Bishop of Springfield, I have asked Monsignor Kemme to serve as my Vicar General, and he has graciously accepted. Thank you, Monsignor Kemme!

I express my gratitude also to the Planning Committee, which has put in many long hours preparing for these events and assisting at this Mass, especially our Chancellor, Ms. Marlene Mulford; my Secretary, Cheryl Kannall; Father Peter Harman, Pastor of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception; Father Christopher House, Vocation Director and Master of Ceremonies and his team of seminarians who assisted as altar servers; our Music Director, Nichol DelGiorno; our organist, Scott Montgomery, and the musicians and choir. Thank you for enhancing our liturgy.

Special thanks to the priests who are here that were with me in Rome during our graduate studies. In particular, Fr. Dan Felton from the Diocese of Green Bay has been most helpful to me in preparing for this day.

I am grateful to Father John Canary, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Chicago; my Administrative Assistant, Elizabeth Ceisel Mikowska; the Vicariate IV Team; Father Lou Cameli, my Spiritual Director, and the many priests and people who are here from the Archdiocese, especially Fr. Michael Bradley Fr. David Pavlik, and Fr. Kenneth Simpson from my priest prayer group, and all my seminary classmates. It has been my privilege to have served with you and for you over the past thirty-two years that I have been a priest. You will always have a special place in my heart.

I am grateful to my family, especially my Mom, my six brothers and two sisters, my aunts, uncles and cousins, not only for your presence here today, but for your prayers and support over the years. My Dad, John H. Paprocki, Jr., is with us in spirit. Thanks, Dad, for your prayers and inspiration.

My dear friend and classmate from law school, Ed Grossman, is here. Ed and I co-founded the Chicago Legal Clinic, which has been a big part of my life and my ministry for the past twenty-nine years. Thank you, Ed!

There is a special group of people here that I would like to introduce. Would my teammates on the Lawyers Hockey Team please stand? We have won the playoffs in the Masters Hockey League for the past three years. They want me to keep playing with them so, as a gift, they have pitched in to create a travel fund for me so I can make it back for the games. Thanks, guys!

There are quite a few people here with whom I've played hockey over the years. Would everyone who's ever played hockey with me please stand.

Also here with us are Blackhawks Alumni Grant Mulvey and Stan Mikita. Grant Mulvey had the highlight of his career on February 3rd, 1982. Playing against the St. Louis Blues, Granny scored 5 goals and 2 assists for 7 points, tying a club record. He also got in a fight that night.

Stan Mikita, of course, is in the National Hockey League Hall of Fame. He won the Stanley Cup with the Blackhawks in 1961, which was the last Stanley Cup in Chicago until earlier this month! Congratulations!

Some of my fellow marathon runners are here: George Jackson, Christopher Kerzich, Dr. Brian Macaulay and José Roman.

There are many more people too numerous to name that I would like to acknowledge. You know who you are, I know who you are, but most importantly, God knows who you are. Thank you and God bless you!