

**Remarks Outline and Invocation for the Banquet following the Installation of
Father Peter Harman as Rector of the Pontifical North American College in Rome**

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- I. Before we pray, as Father Harman's Diocesan Bishop, I think there are some things you should know about him!
 - A. I was questioned carefully by Cardinal Wuerl and Archbishop Myers on behalf of the NAC Board of Governors about Father Harman's suitability to serve as Rector.
 - B. Then, last August when I was in Chicago for the Pallium Mass for Archbishop Cupich, I received a message that the Apostolic Nuncio wanted to see me privately at the Cathedral Rectory before Mass.
 1. I did a quick mental review of my posts on Facebook and Twitter and concluded that I didn't have any problems there!
 2. Archbishop Viganò got right to the point: I had given my permission for Father Peter Harman to be nominated to serve as Rector of the Pontifical North American College in Rome, but before sending his votum to the Congregation for the Clergy, he wanted me to vouch personally for the suitability of Father Harman to be appointed!
 3. I responded that I knew Father Harman to be a very good priest and a dedicated pastor at our Cathedral Parish, that he oversaw a \$15 million renovation of our Cathedral Church that was completed while the See was vacant in 2009, that he is very intelligent, with a doctorate in moral theology, that I use him as my theologian particularly in matters of Catholic morality and bioethics, that I think very highly of him and therefore, yes, I think he would make a fine Rector of the PNAC.
 4. The Nuncio thanked me and said that was all he needed to hear.
 5. So, Peter, if you mess up, you're taking me down with you!

- II. Speaking of messing up, let me tell you about the time Father Harman came running up to my room, very animated about something.
- A. It was just before New Year's Day, and I had been in the diocese about six months, having been installed the previous June.
 - B. He said, "Bishop, *mea culpa, mea culpa, maxima culpa*, I've done something stupid." I tried to be compassionate and said, "What is it, Peter?"
 - C. He replied, holding the new parish bulletin hot off the press, "Well, I confess to cutting and pasting my column in the Cathedral Bulletin from my New Year's message that I wrote last year and it's already been printed, so it's too late to change it."
 - D. I felt relieved and said something like, "Oh, that's not so bad. Most people probably won't even notice that you cut and pasted the same message."
 - E. He said, "I'm not so sure you'll feel that way after you read it." So he handed me the bulletin and I read, "Dear Cathedral Parishioners, As we begin a New Year, we will be praying for many things. At the top of the list, we pray that the Holy Spirit will guide the Pope to send us a new bishop very soon!"
 - F. Some advice: after Archbishop Viganò retires, be careful what you cut and paste about praying for a new Apostolic Nuncio!
 - G. The moral of the story is: if you mess up, tell the bishop yourself as soon as possible so he doesn't hear it from someone else first!
- III. In a more positive vein, let me tell you what a good person and fine priest your new Rector is.
- A. He was born in Quincy, Illinois. The person who gave birth to him is here and we all owe a big debt of gratitude to Mrs. Betty Harman!
 - B. Father Harman's Dad is deceased, but we are also grateful to him as well as Mrs. Harman for having instilled such a deep love for the Lord and for His Church in their son. May he rest in peace.
 - C. Quincy is called the "Gem City." Father Harman has a heart of gold, so our diocese is sharing with all of you one of our gems! I give you a pastor, a priest who thinks as a pastor, serves as a pastor, and loves as a shepherd cares for his flock.

D. We are sending your new Rector to you from the Land of Lincoln, where Springfield's most famous citizen lived for 24 years before becoming our nation's sixteenth and greatest President.

1. Mr. Lincoln had lifelong preoccupation with friends. In 1849, he wrote, "The better part of one's life consists of his friendships." The presence of so many of Father Harman's friends here, both clergy and laity from our diocese, is indicative of the importance of friendship to Father Harman.
2. Lincoln once said after he became President, "I'm a success today because I had a friend who believed in me and I didn't have the heart to let him down." Father Harman, your friends here believe in you and are sure you will be a success because you won't want to let us down!
3. In the midst of the civil war, Lincoln said, "My concern is not whether God is on our side; my greatest concern is to be on God's side, for God is always right." As Rector, you must lead the seminary always to be on God's side, for God is always right.
4. On June 16, 1858, Lincoln gave his famous "House Divided" speech at the Old State Capitol in Springfield, echoing the words of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark (3:25) and the Gospel of Matthew (12:25), "A house divided against itself cannot stand." As Rector, you must work to overcome all factions and divisions within the Church and within the seminary community so that all may be one in the Lord.
5. Lincoln wrote, "Be sure you put your feet in the right place, then stand firm." Reflecting that viewpoint, the official motto of the Pontifical North American College emblazoned under the crest embedded in the floor of the main entrance is the Latin saying, "*Firmum Est Cor Meum*," which means, "My heart stands firm," or "Steadfast is my heart." As St. Augustine wrote, "Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you, O Lord," so we place our hearts firmly in the faith so that we may rest firmly in the Lord.

Therefore, please stand and join with me now in prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you your divine providence in sending Father Peter Harman as the new Rector of the Pontifical North American College. Help him to share the rich love for you that beats within his heart, to be true to his friends, to guide this community in the right paths of truth, to share the oneness of your love, and to place our hearts firmly in the faith so that we may rest firmly in You. Bless this banquet of celebration here as we look forward to the heavenly banquet of your kingdom, and let us pray together, "Bless us, O Lord, and these thy gifts which we are about to receive from thy bounty, through Christ our Lord. Amen."