

**Wednesday, November, 29, 2006,
Ordination Mass with remarks at the conclusion of the Mass.**

I should like to begin by publicly professing praise and thanks to Almighty God. God the Father of Lights has given us the gift of his Eternal Son made flesh, and by the power of the Holy Spirit has engendered in us new life. All gifts I have received in life, including the gift of this day, are contained in the primordial gift of Christ to the world.

I wish to express my loyalty and affection for the person of Our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI. He has asked me to share in the apostolic mission of the Church, and I am grateful for the opportunity to serve.

To Cardinal Maida and to the Bishops and of the province of Detroit, and in a particular way to the Archbishops and Bishops of Texas, I offer a heartfelt word of gratitude, thanking you for your warm good wishes and your prayerful support. I look forward to working in the college of Bishops with all the strength and energy and life that God gives me, for the glory of the Trinity, and the good of the Holy Catholic Church.

In particular, your Eminence, I should like to thank you, and through you, all the many wonderful people in the Archdiocese of Detroit. So many have so generously offered their conscientious hospitality to my family and friends who have traveled from Texas and elsewhere to join with us here today. The spirit of kindness and hospitality shown to my family and to my friends, I take as an act of personal kindness to me, and a sign of the great-hearted love present in this local Church of Detroit. I have received the grace of your kindness, and I am grateful. I hope by my service here in the Archdiocese of Detroit in some way to return the favor. I wish to join my labor to that of the Auxiliary Bishops and the many generous priests, deacons, religious and lay faithful of the Archdiocese in working to build up the Body of Christ here.

In particular, I am grateful to Bishop Rene Gracida, for his presence, and for consenting to be a co-consecrator. He ordained me a priest in 1988, and I am happy that he is here today. And I am grateful also to Bishop Edmond Carmody for his kindness as a shepherd to the people of Corpus Christi, and for his kindness to me, especially during these last few weeks of preparation for my ordination. My thanks also go to Archbishop Joseph Fiorenza, Former Archbishop of Galveston-Houston, as well as to Archbishop Daniel DiNardo, Archbishop of Galveston-Houston. I spent five years serving in their Archdiocese, and I am thankful for the support and guidance they have given to me. And to Archbishop José Gomez, Archbishop of San Antonio, thank you for your presence and for your generous encouragement to my vocation. Thanks also to Archbishop Pilarczyk of Cincinnati, Ohio, for his presence. I have admired the thoughtfulness and lucidity of his thought for many years. I thank also Archbishops Ibrahim and Nicholas, representing the venerable Rites of the Oriental Churches. I am honored by the presence of all.

Present also are religious leaders and representatives of the churches and ecclesial communities of other denominations. In particular I greet Archbishop Nicholas of the Greek Orthodox Church. During this week when Pope Benedict visits with Patriarch Bartholomew in Constantinople, a city I have visited, it is good that today we are joined in prayer. I thank all of you for your good will and prayers, and your witness to our common hopes in Christ.

In a certain way, the presence of so many family and friends here is a personal reminder that Catholicity begins with professing one faith, and bears fruit in a real communion of life and love. Catholicity involves a communion of faith, and life, of family and friends in the joy and grace of Christ. God has granted to me during my life a real experience of that gift. I have many friends here whom I have known over the years, but who have not known each other, and it is a great joy to see them together in one place. I look over the many faces and I rejoice in the way God has manifested generous mystery of the Church in the very personal gift of family and friends.

Priests, Deacons and Religious Sisters and Brothers from Detroit, Corpus Christi, and many other places are here. People I have known from Zapata, Laredo, Corpus Christi, Houston, Dallas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Philadelphia, and Rome are here. There are many who have traveled here from Corpus Christi Cathedral Parish. I have enjoyed my time at the Cathedral in Corpus Christi, and I will ever pray for that parish community, for the many generous souls who work and labor in love for that blessed parish family. Present also are seminarians and recently ordained priests from Saint Mary's Seminary in Houston. I am humbled by the presence of so many friends who have been so important in my life. I particularly take the presence of so many seminarians as a sign of their continued prayerful support, something I have relied upon for many years. To the seminarians in particular, I say, love Christ, serve his people, and in the gift of yourself you will encounter the Lord.

Quiero saludar mis nuevos amigos de la arquidiócesis de Detroit. Tengo ansias para empezar a trabajar con ustedes, y mas que eso, anticipo las oportunidades que tendremos para compartir la vida que tenemos in la comunión de nuestro Señor Jesucristo.

En la iglesia, festejamos y enseñamos lo que Dios ha hecho. Proclamamos aquellos misterios del amor de Dios sobresaliendo del corazón abierto de Jesús. Desde este corazón abierto, el Señor incita por su gracia el deseo que tenemos para agregar todo el mundo alrededor del trono de su amable majestad.

La comunidad hispana en Detroit tiene una cita con Jesús, una tarea a ella confiada, una misión de servicio. La misión es de ser levadura de fe, caridad y comunión en el mundo de hoy. Requiere todas nuestras fuerzas y merece la entrega de todo nuestro ser.

Compartir la misión de Jesús tiene el efecto de profundizar nuestra comunión en el camino de la vida. Y la comunión sirve para animar la misión que nos ha entregado el Señor Jesús. La misión es de todos, y yo vengo para servir a todos deseosos de participar en esta misión.

Personally, I wish gratefully and most especially to acknowledge the presence of my Mother, my two brothers and my sister here today, together with my nephews and nieces, and many cousins. They have been the first and finest gifts of God's providence to me. They represent a large and close family, and in their eyes I see also my grandparents. *Veo a ustedes y veo a Mamá Tere, Papa Wíle, Papá Beto y Mamá Pepa.*

Particularly I am grateful for the presence of two of my Father's sisters who were able to make the trip to Detroit. Their presence represents for me his presence, and I am grateful to them for his sake. I owe to him and to my Mother, whatever is at all noble and well formed in me.

I find I have said many things, but really I have not said what I most profoundly wish to say. The human word can never completely express the human soul. This is a mysterious limitation I experience acutely today.

There was a play written by José Maria Pemán about the life of Saint Francis Xavier. It was called *El Divino Impaciente*. In it there is a scene wherein Francis Xavier expresses his affection for his friend Saint Ignatius of Loyola. The poet puts some quiet words on the lips of Francis.¹ I would

¹ Perdonadme, Padre Ignacio,
Que no diga lo que siento.
Vos entendéis a las almas
Traducidme este silencio;
Que vos me habéis enseñado
Con la lección y el ejemplo,
A ser de expresión más corto
Cuando es más largo el afecto.

like to take the liberty of adapting the phrases in order to say something of what I experience in trying to express my gratitude to all who are here today.

Forgive me, dear friends,
I cannot say not what I feel,
You who understand my soul,
And can hear its silent peal.
Blood and life have taught me,
Love in quiet best speaks its part,
"Be shorter is the saying,
When affection lies deeper in the heart."

Me faltan palabras para comunicar lo que mas siento en este momento. Les ofrezco, entonces, estas pocas palabras adaptadas del poeta José Maria Pemán.

Perdónenme, queridos míos,
Que no diga lo que siento.
Entiendan bien mi alma,
Para que puedan traducir mi silencio;
La vida me ha enseñado,
Con la lección y el ejemplo,
A ser de expresión más corto
Cuando es más largo el afecto.

May God bless you all for your kindness, and in all things, may Jesus Christ be praised. Amen.

(Texto tomado del primer acto de la obra teatral "El Divino Impaciente," sobre la vida de San Francisco Javier, escrita por José Maria Pemán.)