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*Archbishop of Denver*

Addresses

## **Remarks during Vespers Service for Auxiliary Bishop-elect Conley**

Christ the King Parish, Denver, May 29, 2008

Two joys feed the life of every Christian. The first joy is meeting Jesus Christ. The writer François Mauriac once said that, "Anyone who has truly known God, can never be cured of Him." He meant that when we really encounter Jesus Christ, our lives change forever.

The second joy for a Christian is sharing Jesus Christ with others . . . and we share Him, again, in two ways.

The first way is by preaching Jesus Christ to the world around us. Catholics and all Christians are missionaries by nature. God wrote that mandate onto our hearts at our Baptism: the mandate to "make disciples of all nations." And we can't be happy in the way God intends us to be happy, unless we preach about, and witness to, the person of Jesus Christ in our daily lives.

The second way we share Jesus Christ is by strengthening love for Him in our brothers and sisters who already believe. That can be hard work, because all of us sometimes get tired or distracted. We need the encouragement of each other to be strong in our lives as disciples. So each of us, in some way must be the presence of Jesus Christ to one another.

Tomorrow is a very solemn day in the life of the Catholic community here in northern Colorado. Once Bishop-elect Conley is ordained as a bishop, he will become not only a preacher and teacher of Jesus Christ, but a successor of the Apostles and an icon of Christ Himself. In helping me shepherd this archdiocese, he'll be giving up his own life on a daily basis, and putting on a new life of service and encouragement to our people. Being a bishop is joyful work and fulfilling work -- and also demanding work. So I ask you to keep him in your friendship, love and prayers tonight and in the years ahead.

I want to thank in a special way Colorado's Governor Bill Ritter and Denver's Mayor John Hickenlooper, who cannot be with us tonight because of other longstanding commitments. But both have sent along greetings for Bishop-elect Conley which we'll be hearing in just a moment.

Likewise I want to welcome Father Luke Uhl, chancellor of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Denver, Father Lou Christopolous and Father Vasilios Flegas], who are here representing Metropolitan Isaiah -- a wonderful man and a good friend.

I also want to greet the leaders of Colorado's ecumenical and inter-faith community who join us tonight: Dr. Jim Ryan of the Colorado Council of Churches and Rabbi Lewis Bogage from the Rocky Mountain Rabbinical Council and the American Jewish Committee. Your duties are many and your time is precious, so your presence here tonight is very greatly appreciated by the Catholic community. Thank you for being part of this celebration.

I also want to thank the many visitors from Kansas and elsewhere who have traveled a great distance to honor not only Bishop-elect Conley, but the whole Church in Colorado, by their presence. Finally, and most importantly, I want to thank the members of Bishop Conley's family -- and especially his mother, who is with us tonight. A man is shaped by the people who love him and teach him. Bishop Conley's goodness is a reflection of your love, and for that we will always be grateful. Welcome -- and God bless you for preparing this man so well for the vocation God now calls him to.