



Remarks by: Most Rev. José H. Gomez, S.T.D.
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This is a moment of excitement, but also a lot of emotion. So please forgive me if I don't find the words to say everything that is in my heart.

I want to thank the Holy Father for his confidence in me. John Paul II has been Pope for most of my priesthood. In every way he embodies for me what a priest and bishop should be. To be given this task by him is a very great gift.

I also want to thank Archbishop Flores, Bishop Zurek, Bishop Flanagan and Bishop Popp for their friendship and wonderful welcome. Archbishop Flores is a man of uncommon goodness and grace. There's no way I can replace him. But I do promise to honor his example by serving the Church and God's people with all the strength that I have. From today forward, this diocese is my home. From today forward, this diocese is my family. Nothing could be a greater blessing in my life.

To my brother priests and deacons of the Church in San Antonio: I promise you my friendship and support. I also ask for your patience and help. I will need both. To all the wonderful religious and laypeople of the archdiocese -- Latino and Anglo, from every walk of life -- please pray for me so that I become the kind of bishop God wants, and the kind of bishop our Church needs. With all my heart, I want to be a bishop for all our people.

Sometimes the people who live here may not see just how important the Church in San Antonio is for the whole American Catholic community. Every diocese has a special vocation, just like every individual life. I think God intends this Church -- our people of San Antonio -- to be a witness of reconciliation between the old and the new, between cultures and languages; a witness of zeal for Jesus Christ and a new sign of Catholic confidence in bringing our country back to the Gospel.

People have already asked me what my plan is as the new archbishop. My "plan" is to listen and learn before I have any plan at all. I'm not a stranger here. Some of you may know that my mother grew up in San Antonio, and my maternal grandparents were married here in San Antonio at our Cathedral of San Fernando. I also did pastoral work in Houston and San Antonio for 14 years as a priest. So I have many wonderful friends from those years in Texas -- and I do know the Church here, because it helped to form me. Coming to San Antonio really is, in a sense, coming home.

But I also have a great deal to learn. Frankly, today would be frightening for me in any other diocese. What comforts me here in San Antonio is that I know I can count on many good teachers and brothers -- and the very generous spirit of the best city in Texas.

I want to thank Archbishop Charles Chaput of Denver for teaching me how to be a bishop with the example of his humor, patience and tremendous love for the Church. I'll always be grateful to the priests and people of the Archdiocese of Denver, who prepared me for this new life I begin today.

I also want to thank my family for their love, which has sustained me in my priesthood throughout my vocation. Two of my sisters are with me today, and to them I want to say in a special way: Thank you for being true to the Christian witness our parents gave us through their lives.

Finally, and above all, I thank God for my priesthood, and Our Lady of Guadalupe for leading me to this new family of so many good and faithful Catholic people.

May God give me the grace to build on all the good that has already been achieved here.

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For more information on Most Rev. José H. Gomez, S.T.D., please log on to www.archden.org and click on Most Rev. José H. Gomez, S.T.D. or www.archdiosa.org