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**Embargo until 2:30 p.m. September 8, 2008**

## **Most Rev. W. Francis Malooly Mass of Installation Homily Text**

September 8, 2008 --- (Wilmington, DE) --- The following is the text of the homily given by Bishop Malooly at today's Mass of Installation at St. Elizabeth Church in Wilmington, Delaware:

Your Eminence, Your Excellency, Archbishop Sambini, my brother bishops, priests, and deacons, women and men in consecrated life, seminarians, distinguished guests, our sisters and brothers from other faith families, the people of God of the Diocese of Wilmington—

I am delighted to be here. I am grateful to our Holy Father for this assignment. I am grateful to Archbishop Sambini for his confidence and kindness. I very much want to thank my three most recent spiritual fathers, the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> Archbishops of Baltimore, Archbishop Borders, Cardinal Keeler and Archbishop O'Brien. I am also grateful to Bishop Saltarelli, our outstanding Bishop and a good friend, and to his predecessor Bishop Mulvey--another of our outstanding spiritual leaders here in the Diocese of Wilmington. Wilmington has been blessed with eight bishops. We will see how number nine works out later.

In early discussions, Bishop Saltarelli and I both agreed that this Feast Day of the Nativity of Mary would be a wonderfully appropriate day for the installation. Mary's mother, St. Anne, carried a very special life in her womb which serves as a vivid reminder that every life is special. We will continue to stress the constant teaching of the Church that each person must respect every life from conception to natural death. And we will continue to seek the intercession of Saint Thomas More for Statesmen, Politicians, Supreme Court Justices, Judges and Lawyers—that they may be courageous and effective in defending and promoting the sanctity of human life, the foundation of every human right, the foundation of our love for the poor.

The feast we celebrate today also calls to mind the innocence that is the birthright of every child. Sadly, the innocence of too many of our diocese's children was stolen by the very individuals whose duty it was to protect and safeguard it. To the children who, through their inner strength, supportive families and their remarkable and enduring faith, summoned the courage to survive their abuse, I apologize for the innocence that was stolen from you by Catholic clergy and others representing our Church. I vow to continue the work begun by Bishop Saltarelli to bring healing to you and to your families and to try to restore the trust that was broken when these sins—no,

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these crimes---were committed. I want to meet each and every victim who desires such a meeting with me. I want to hear what you want me to hear, and I want to work closely with each of you to learn how best the Church can be a part of bringing healing to all victims.

I also want to promote reconciliation with the Church to all victims. You had more than your innocence stolen from you--many of you also had your faith taken away. I want to personally ask you to consider a return to the Church—your Church---and I promise you today, before your sisters and brothers in faith—that we will never again allow the innocence of one more child to be taken away.

In April, our Holy Father in speaking at Nationals Stadium in Washington, said, “Great efforts have already been made to deal honestly and fairly with this tragic situation, and to ensure that children—whom our Lord loves deeply and who are our greatest treasure—can grow up in a safe environment. These efforts to protect children must continue.” I assure you that these efforts will continue in the Diocese of Wilmington. There is no greater priority, no greater responsibility than the safety of those entrusted to our care. Every employee, every volunteer from Pocomoke City to Claymont will make it his or her personal responsibility to ensure the safety of every child in our Church.

The faith and unity of our local Church will be tested in the months and even years ahead as a result of the legal process which must be followed. I ask you to join me in praying that the Holy Spirit will guide all involved in this process and that our Church will emerge purified and renewed as we walk together on this journey.

In our first reading, Micah shares the prediction of the coming of our Lord – “He shall stand firm and shepherd his flock by the strength of the Lord. He shall be peace.” I hope I can do both. In Paul’s letter to the Ephesians we hear that God our Father has chosen us to be holy before him. Each one of us can be holy through imitation of the example Jesus set and a healthy prayer life. The sacraments, especially the Eucharist sustain us as we strive for holiness.

In Matthew’s gospel the angel of the Lord speaks to Joseph. “She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus because he will save his people from their sin.” In gratitude we proclaim what Jesus has done for us. God is with us.

I have no predisposed plan for what I will do as your Bishop. I will work with you to develop what we will do together and to continue the good that has occurred. However, what we do will be grounded in Bishop Saltarelli’s pastoral letter for the year of St. Paul. This Pastoral Letter calls each of us to our own unique road to a Damascus conversion experience during the Year of Saint Paul and asks each of us to hold a mirror to our lives and to ask ourselves: are we as determined and as energetic about spreading the Catholic faith as Saint Paul was? Each of us is a missionary. Each of us is called to be a saint. From his letter we hear how we are to live as people who are joyful, welcoming, service oriented, who are the face of Jesus for others. From Paul we learn that each person is important. I ask each of you in our parishes, schools and institutions to be hospitable, interested, excited about what you do. I ask you to reinforce and support each other. When I visited a parish a month ago immediately the secretary came out, not knowing who I was, to welcome me and to ask if she could be of help. When I walked into the Church the maintenance man who was working on a project stopped and came over to see if he could be of assistance. Each of us by our own holiness, by our imitation of Jesus, by trying to be the face of Jesus can lead people to the Church. We have many wonderful ministries here in the Diocese of Wilmington. I want to encourage and support each of them. more>

Now, a word to our Hispanic Catholic community:

*Estoy muy orgulloso de ser su obispo, y espero caminar junto a ustedes en su viaje de fe. Anticipo con gran esperanza también ejercer mi ministerio entre ustedes, y aprender como la Iglesia les puede servir de la mejor manera. Es un privilegio para mi servirles, y les extiendo el amor de Cristo en el nombre de toda la Diócesis de Wilmington. Voy a estudiar español, y además visitaré a un hermano obispo en San Marco, Guatemala para poder compartir mejor nuestra fe con ustedes, y que ustedes la compartan conmigo.*

[I am proud to be your bishop and look forward to walking with you on your faith journey. I also look forward to ministering to you and to learning how best the Church can serve your needs. It is a privilege to serve you and I extend to you the love of Christ on behalf of the entire Diocese of Wilmington. I will be tutored in Spanish and will also visit a brother bishop in San Marcos, Guatemala so I can learn how to better share our faith with you and have you share with me.]

Finally, I will lead but I want to walk with you and I want you to walk with me. Let me say that again – I will lead, but I want to walk with you and have you walk with me. And thank you for your warm welcome.

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