

Bishop Mark Hagemoen – Presentation following the Ordination MASS

1) Absolutely grateful to Almighty God!!!

a) Not just at becoming a bishop. Of course, I am aware of the privilege, and great task that one who is called to the episcopacy faces, and I am very grateful to His Holiness, Pope Francis, for his call to me to be the Bishop of this particular Church and People of God.

b) However, I am utterly amazed and grateful for what God is doing through the generous lives of His people (here in the Diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith, the Archdiocese of Vancouver, and through the various), and as I am only beginning to discover, among the various communities and cultures of this great northern land, and especially among its Aboriginal peoples! I have much to learn – and I look forward to my first pastoral priority – meeting and listening to the peoples of this vast and blest diocese.

c) I am very grateful, and wish to acknowledge, the pastoral leadership of this dioceses' recent shepherds: Bishop Dennis Croteau, and now Archbishop Murray Chatlain. I only highlight what you all know well – their fervent love for the Church, their deep love for all of God's people, and their lives of personal holiness have been such a gift of true pastoral leadership. I come to a diocese that is in very good shape, in very large part because of them, and I know that I will be relying on them for their support and wisdom going forward.

2) **Very grateful to Jesus Christ** – who shows me and all of us the unique and crucial path to abundant life! I am also convinced that the call to be a bishop – and in this particular diocese, will call me to greater and deeper holiness – which is exciting, but I must admit a wonderfully ominous journey. However, I am grateful for the many teachers – bishops under whom I have served, brother priests, religious, laity- family members, friends – who have revealed to me the Saviour, and who have shown me what it means to hunger and thirst for Jesus- the food that truly nourishes and satisfies – and are then able to feed others. I will rely on these 'teachers', as I also receive new 'teachers'. May we all always be nurtured, sustained, and guided by the ultimate teacher – the ultimate saviour and servant of the world – Jesus Christ.

3) **Finally, a reflection about HOPE.** Hope is real in this diocese – both as that which is already present, and that which is sought after. Indeed, *hope* is such a need for our world today. Our world is getting smaller, and as the nations connect together as they

have never before, peoples reflect on what is to come, and what may be gained or lost. As you may have already noticed, my Episcopal motto under my coat of arms references the Latin - SPES ...HOPE in English.

- Pope Francis addresses HOPE in his recent encyclical on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World, and describes HOPE as an issue intimately and vitally involving ourselves, God, and others. He speaks of spirit-filled evangelizers who pray and work – who combine a whole spirituality that cultivates an interior space for what he calls *contemplative evangelizers*. He reflects about how we 'speak' are authentic witnesses to hope:

“Without prolonged moment of adoration, of prayerful encounter with the word, of sincere conversation with the Lord, our work easily becomes meaningless; we lose energy as a result of weariness and difficulties, and our fervour dies out.” He goes on to point out that the Church urgently needs persons who live in the place of prayer and silence with God, and therefore are able to live out such richness in being and sharing with others what they are themselves receiving from the God of the universe.”

The last synod of this diocese, which concluded in 1991, related the meaning New Wine, and New Wineskins”. Brothers and sisters of the Diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith, let us journey together as a people building on the lives, sacrifice, and legacy of those who have gone before us - as a people of hope, in the way of Jesus Christ:

A hope that ...

- Seeks *unity* **AND** *leads us to recognize God's blessings of personal and community giftedness and other rich features which make the God's human family such a blessing*

A hope that...

- Calls us to *hold the bar high in living good, wonderful and holy lives* **AND** calls us to *bring the love and mercy of Jesus to the fallen and broken*, so that in Him we can be raised up, and raise each other up!
- And, let us seek a HOPE that is directed to a future that is a real and true blessing for all of our brothers and sisters – a future that is made manifest now, AND in our willingness to really *SEEK THE LORD together!!*

Looking forward to the journey ahead. GOD BLESS YOU ALL!