



# ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER

## **Remarks of Bishop-elect James D. Conley**

**on his appointment as  
as auxiliary bishop of Denver**

*April 10, 2008, 9 a.m., press conference  
Cardinal Stafford Library, Denver, Colorado*

**Good morning and thank you for being here.**

**I'm both honored and humbled that our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, has called me to the office of bishop and appointed me auxiliary to Denver's Archbishop Chaput. As I wrote in my letter of acceptance to the Holy Father, I am very mindful of my own unworthiness for this office, and I am deeply moved by the confidence he has placed in me. At the same time, I have always believed in God's providential hand in my life, and he has always given me the grace to fulfill every new responsibility. Relying upon God's help, I pray that he will guide me in this new ministry and that he will help me to serve the good people of the Church in northern Colorado with zeal and joy.**

**I would also like to thank Archbishop Chaput for his kindness to me, especially over these past few weeks since I learned of the appointment. Archbishop Chaput has been a big hero of mine over the years. His tremendous love for the Church, his fidelity to the Holy Father and the Magisterium, and his charity and zeal for souls, have always been a model for me. I look forward to learning from him how to be a good and holy bishop. I would also like to thank his very competent staff as well, who have all been kind and helpful to me over these past days.**

**As you will note in my biography, I spent the early years of my childhood here in the Denver Metropolitan area and I have fond memories of those years. I was not a**

Catholic then, but I have come to learn that the Catholic community in the Archdiocese of Denver is young and very dynamic. I look forward eagerly to learning more about the archdiocese, meeting the people of northern Colorado, and being a part of the effort to bring about the New Evangelization, as Pope John Paul II urged us all at the beginning of the Millennium.

I especially look forward to meeting the priests of the archdiocese and supporting them in their pastoral ministry. I love the priesthood and I thank God every day for my vocation. I want the priests of the archdiocese to know me as a friend and to see me as a brother priest. I want to do all that I can to be a source of fraternity and friendship as they carry out their vital pastoral ministry. With the presence of two archdiocesan seminaries, I look forward to helping in the formation of new priests and to assisting our veteran priests in promoting vocations to the priesthood and to the religious life.

I admit that I am sad to be leaving my parish of Blessed Sacrament in Wichita. I will truly miss the people and my brother priests of the Wichita Diocese. Since my return from Rome in 2006, I have treasured parish life as a pastor of souls. Blessed Sacrament is a wonderful “neighborhood parish” and I have thanked God everyday for appointing me pastor. I will miss the families that I have come to know and love very much.

I realize, however, that when I became a priest I surrendered my life to Christ for the needs of his Church. I remember reading a book in the seminary called *The Priest Is Not His Own*, by Archbishop Fulton Sheen. This means that we go in faith where we are sent, just like the apostles. We priests belong to Jesus Christ and to his bride the Church. This is hard sometimes and it requires a lot of sacrifice and prayer. But I also have a sense of peace and freedom, knowing that this is not my decision, but the Lord's.

I have chosen for my episcopal motto: *cor ad cor loquitur* which means “heart speaks to heart”. Some of you may recognize that this is the same motto chosen by

**the great 19<sup>th</sup> century English convert to the Catholic faith, the Venerable John Henry Cardinal Newman. Cardinal Newman had a huge influence on my own conversion and in my vocation to the priesthood. He continues to be a kind of spiritual mentor to me.**

**For me, this motto teaches us that souls are won over to Christ, heart to heart, person to person, through goodness and friendship. Cardinal Newman once wrote that next to the influence of supernatural grace, the greatest influence over the human soul is the example of goodness and virtue in another person.**

**In my own life, I think first of all of my dear father who passed away in November of 2006, and my mother, both of whom loved my sister and me with selfless generosity and goodness. I think of my professors in college, particularly Prof. John Senior, my godfather, whose good example and love of the truth led me to the Catholic faith. I think of my brother priests, my friends and parishioners, and I am grateful to God for the influence they have had in my life.**

**I will be ordained a bishop on May 30, the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Ultimately, it is the Heart of Jesus that speaks to all of our hearts, drawing us through grace to an ever deeper union with his most Sacred Heart, in the love of the Blessed Trinity and under the mantle of the Blessed Virgin Mary and her Immaculate Heart.**

**I want to conclude these remarks by humbly and sincerely asking for your prayers as I take on this new responsibility. Pray that I might be a good shepherd, after the Heart of the Good Shepherd. Pray that I might serve the Church in northern Colorado and assist your good archbishop with deep love, fidelity, and courage. And in return, I promise to pray for you and your families as we begin this journey together. God bless you.**

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