



## ***DIOCESE OF RAPID CITY***

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July 1, 2010

OFFICE OF BISHOP

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

On Wednesday, June 30, the Holy See announced that Pope Benedict XVI appointed me Bishop of Spokane. As I told the Holy Father in my letter of acceptance, I am quite content to remain in my present position as Bishop of Rapid City, and I had no interest in leaving. Yet, I am respectful of the demands that fall on him as Chief Shepherd of the Universal Church. And so with faith in God and abiding trust in Divine Providence, I accepted this appointment.

Some may rightly be concerned by the timing of this change in pastoral governance of the diocese. After all, we have not yet completed the *We Walk by Faith Appeal*, and we are just beginning the historic project of renovating *Terra Sancta* and enhancing our outreach to college students in our Newman Centers. Those and other factors weighed heavily on me as I considered this appointment. At the same time, I have learned over these past twelve years as your bishop that the Catholic community in western South Dakota is both resilient and resourceful. It is enriched by a blend of rural and city dwellers, Lakota and Hispanic cultures to the point that people constantly are learning new ways to work together for the good of all. My esteem for you in this regard has only heightened over these past few months, particularly as I witness the vibrant and enthusiastic leadership of our lay leaders, religious, deacon couples and priests. There is no doubt in my mind that they will bring to completion with God's help the good work that has begun. Had I had any doubts about this, a refusal would have been easy for me.

There is no little irony in all of this for me personally, for in 1998, when my appointment to Rapid City came, I was in the middle of a major renovation and renewal in my parish in Omaha. You should take heart in knowing that the people in my former parish not only completed that project, but they enhanced the original plan far beyond anything I had dreamed possible. I am confident that the same will be true for this diocese. You can rely on my support and admiration.

My installation is scheduled for September 3, the Feast of St. Gregory the Great. Until I leave for my new service in eastern Washington, I will remain the bishop here. Upon my departure for Spokane, the consultors will gather and elect an administrator. I ask your support of whomever they choose to govern the diocese for the period before a new bishop is named and installed. I will have occasions over the summer to tell you more what is in my heart and to thank you. Let it be sufficient for me to say on this occasion that I miss you already.

Sincerely in Christ,

+Blase J. Cupich  
Bishop of Rapid City