



## DIOCESE OF HARRISBURG — Office of the Bishop

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### **Statement by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades in Fort Wayne and South Bend (November 14, 2009)**

I am both humbled and honored by Pope Benedict XVI's appointment of me as ninth Bishop of Fort Wayne – South Bend. I am particularly humbled to succeed Bishop John D'Arcy, who has served the faithful of this diocese with such great devotion and love for over 24 years. I am deeply grateful to Bishop D'Arcy for his very warm welcome and I look forward to learning from him about this wonderful diocese as I prepare to become your new shepherd.

I have been Bishop of my home diocese of Harrisburg for the past five years. Naturally, it will not be easy for me to bid farewell to my family and friends, my brother priests and the faithful of the Harrisburg diocese. I express my deep gratitude to them for their support, prayers, and affection. It has been a tremendous blessing in my life to serve as Bishop of Harrisburg and indeed to have served as a priest of the Diocese of Harrisburg for 26 years.

With joyful anticipation, I look forward now to serving as Bishop of Fort Wayne – South Bend. I look forward to meeting the priests, deacons, men and women in consecrated life, and lay faithful of the diocese. My greatest joys as Bishop have been in being with the people, teaching the faith and celebrating the sacraments. I am looking forward to visiting the parishes, schools, and other communities of my new diocese. My only previous visit to this diocese was in 2006 when I visited the University of Notre Dame for a game between my two favorite college football teams, Notre Dame and Penn State. I remember well celebrating Holy Mass in the beautiful Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus after the game.

Bishops serve the Church as successors of the Apostles. Our Lord Jesus sent the apostles forth with the mandate to teach, sanctify, and serve as He did. Jesus said to the apostles: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (John 20:21). I am conscious of "being sent" from Harrisburg to Fort Wayne – South Bend. As I accept this appointment of our Holy Father, I do so with faith and trust in the Lord. I have before my eyes the example of the Good Shepherd who came not to be served but to serve and to give his life for the sheep. I ask for your prayers that I may be a true shepherd after the heart of Christ.

I pledge to the people of my new diocese my love and my prayers. I was very happy to learn that the Blessed Virgin Mary, under the title of the Immaculate Conception, is the patroness of the Diocese of Fort Wayne – South Bend. Let us implore her intercession that we may fulfill the task which Christ has entrusted to us. Our Blessed Mother accompanies us with her maternal care as we journey together on our earthly pilgrimage of faith, hope, and love.

Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades