



DIOCESE OF HARRISBURG — Office of the Bishop

4800 Union Deposit Road — Box 2153 • Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17105-2153
(717) 657-4804

Statement by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades in Harrisburg

(November 15, 2009)

It is obviously with very mixed emotions that I speak to you today. Yesterday, at press conferences in both Fort Wayne and South Bend, I said that “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 am so very grateful for all the love and support I have received throughout these past five years as Bishop of this great diocese. Indeed, I am very grateful for all the blessings of the past 26 years as a priest of the Diocese of Harrisburg. It has been a great privilege and a tremendous grace to have served here.

I also stated yesterday that I was ready to go forth and serve in another area of the Lord’s vineyard, the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. Part of the life of the bishop, and indeed of the life of every priest, is the willingness to accept new assignments, to go where we are sent. There is something very liberating about obedience in the Church. When we do the Lord’s will, even when it can be difficult at times, we experience a certain peace in our souls. I feel that peace in obeying the Lord’s call by accepting this new appointment from the successor of Saint Peter, Pope Benedict XVI. The bishops of the Catholic Church are the successors of the apostles. I am reminded of the lives of the first apostles who left family, occupation, and home to go forth, sent by Jesus, 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 the prayers of the people of the Diocese of Harrisburg that I may go forth with the strength needed to serve as a true shepherd after the heart of Christ in a new area of the Lord’s vineyard.

I will always be grateful for the years of my life spent in the Diocese of Harrisburg: my childhood and teenage years in Lebanon, my priestly assignments in York and Harrisburg, and my five years as Bishop of this beautiful diocese. I will always remember the faithful of this diocese in my prayers. I pray that the Lord will continue to bless the Diocese of Harrisburg with His abundant love and grace!

Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades