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Dolan: 'Startled,' 'somber' over pope's resignation

Joshua J. McElwee | Feb. 11, 2013 NCR Today
Benedict Resigns

New York Cardinal Timothy Dolan, the president of the U.S. bishops' conference says he was "as startled as the rest of you" to learn of Pope Benedict's resignation.

Appearing on NBC's Today Show this morning, Dolan, who was appointed a cardinal by Pope Benedict last year, said the news made feel "somber."

"I find myself kind of somber, in a way," Dolan said on the show. "Boy, I love this pope. Every Catholic feels the pope is his father, we call him our Holy Father. The world looks to him with respect and affection."

"I sense a special bond with him," Dolan continued. "He?s the one who appointed me to you all as archbishop of New York. I?m wearing the ring he gave me and the cross he gave me. So I feel a particular bond with him and a note of sadness.?

?On the other hand my appreciation is enhanced a bit?with this sense of realism and such an esteem for the office of the successor of Saint Peter," said Dolan.

?That he says, ?I may not be up to it now. And perhaps I can best serve Jesus and his church and his people by stepping aside.? So I have to admire him immensely.?

One of 118 cardinals who will be electing Pope Benedict's successor, as a cardinal, Dolan himself is a contender for the post.

Asked by Today co-host Matt Lauer if he would be voting for himself for the post, Dolan replied with a laugh: "Crazy people cannot enter the conclave.?

"I?ve never been through this before," said Dolan. "I?m still unpacking the red socks from a year ago, when I was made a cardinal."

"I?m going to need some coaching here. I don?t exactly know, except for prayer?I don?t know what else to do.?

Following is the full video of Dolan's remarks.

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