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Beyond tradition, ritual, archbishop's installation like family reunion

Dan Russo Catholic News Service | Jun. 4, 2013

On the 32nd anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood, Archbishop Michael Jackels was installed May 30 as the new chief pastor of the 175-year-old Dubuque archdiocese.

After the 59-year-old took a seat in the center of the sanctuary at the Church of the Nativity in Dubuque, retiring Archbishop Jerome Hanus, bowed to his successor, the 10th archbishop to hold the post. An assembly of about 1,200 people erupted in applause.

"Let him be a good shepherd who knows his sheep and whose sheep know him," Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano, apostolic nuncio to the United States, said shortly before handing the new archbishop a crosier originally used by Bishop Mathias Loras, the first bishop of Dubuque, who was appointed in 1837.

Vigano read an English translation of the papal mandate, written in Latin. This officially transferred responsibility for the spiritual leadership of the approximately 200,000 Catholics in the Dubuque archdiocese to Jackels, who previously served as bishop of the diocese of Wichita, Kan.

Dominican Sr. Maureen McPartland, archdiocesan chancellor, presented the "papal bull" to the archdiocesan College of Consultors, a group of priest advisers, and then displayed it to the rest of those assembled.

The installation ceremony and the Mass that followed were a feast for the senses as well as the soul, incorporating ancient traditions and symbols of the Catholic church, including colorful vestments, sweet-smelling incense and sacred music.

Jackels got a laugh from the assembly when he alluded to the sense of taste in his homily, while speaking about the history of priests and religious in the archdiocese.

"We need more priests," he said. "I like to say seminarians are like incense at Mass and garlic in cooking: More is better."

"And the church needs more women and men in consecrated life: to model how to live a shared life of self-gift in service; to show how hope in heaven is linked to the true development of the world; to serve with others to continue the mission of Jesus in the church and the world," he said.

An ornate opening procession featured hundreds of priests, deacons, religious and laity. Knights and Ladies of the Holy Sepulchre led the way, followed soon after by the Knights of Columbus and a flute band of Catholic Burmese refugees who settled in the archdiocese. Culminating the procession of clergy, which included priests from the archbishop's former dioceses of Wichita and Lincoln, Neb., were about two dozen bishops from around the nation.

The Archdiocesan Chorale, accompanied by a group of instrumental musicians, provided most of the music. A choir from Regis Catholic Middle School in Cedar Rapids sang Mozart's "Ave Verum Corpus" as a Communion

song.

Beyond the spectacle and ritual, the gathering, at its core, felt like a family reunion.

"I had the impression that this was something really big," said Joshua Stika, a student at Dubuque's St. Pius X Seminary, who participated in the ceremony. "For me, it showed the unity of the church -- the church family. You have people here even from other countries and everyone's coming together."

The archbishop's cousins, aunt and uncle came from Minnesota. His sisters and mother brought up the gifts at Mass, prompting hugs and kisses as they delivered the bread and wine.

"I believe the church of Dubuque is getting a wonderful person," Carol Brunn, the archbishop's aunt, told *The Witness*, the archdiocesan newspaper. "He's a great listener and he respects everyone for where they're at."

Three relatives of Loras traveled from France and took part in the events. In his homily, Jackels alluded to the past contributions of the church's spiritual family members, while simultaneously, looking to the future.

"We have an invitation: to build on the good work that others have done over the past 175 years of our history, beginning with Bishop Loras -- whose family is represented here today -- good work continued by Archbishop Hanus, Archbishop (Daniel W.) Kucera, and the many clergy, religious, and lay faithful who knew Jesus, loved him, and said 'yes' to the invitation of Jesus to labor with him in the vineyard," the archbishop said.

As part of the installation ceremony, representatives from different segments of the Catholic community, civic leaders and representatives of other faiths greeted the archbishop.

"I appreciated his message," Sr. Teri Hadro, a Sister of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, said afterward. "I liked how inclusive it was."

Hadro, president of her religious community, represented the first women's religious order to come to the archdiocese at the invitation of Loras in 1843.

Paul and Jodi Sigwarth and three of their children, parishioners at the Church of the Nativity, were asked to represent the laity. "The one part where we got a good smile out of him, my daughter, who goes to a Spanish-immersion school ... said to him, 'Bienvenido a nuestra iglesia,' ('Welcome to our church')," said Paul Sigwarth.

Fr. Dustin Lyon, a priest from the St. Elias the Prophet Orthodox Christian Church in Dubuque, gave the archbishop a religious icon as a gift.

"I think getting to know each other is a good thing," Lyon said. "I was humbled to be part of the ceremony. When I greeted (Jackels) I said, 'Axios,' which means, 'He is worthy' (in Greek). It's something we say at our ordinations."

[Dan Russo is a staff writer at *The Witness*, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Dubuque, Iowa.]

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