

Diocese of Juneau

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release



Bishop Burns presents ‘groundbreaking’ Pastoral Letter in conclusion of the Year for Priests

PETERSBURG, AK - Bishop Edward J. Burns of the Catholic Diocese of Juneau introduced a new pastoral letter for his Diocese while at St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Petersburg, Alaska for the Feast of Corpus Christi on Sunday, June 6, 2010.

The pastoral letter, “Strengthening the Church through a Strong and Holy Presbyterate”, is unique in that it was drafted by all the priests and the bishop. The priests and bishop together make up the ‘presbyterate’ of the diocese. “Creating this pastoral letter with the help of all the priests of the diocese serves as an appropriate conclusion to the universal Year for Priests” said Bishop Burns.

Pope Benedict XVI declared a worldwide celebration of The Year for Priests on June 19, 2009 in commemorating the 150th anniversary of St. John Vianney’s death. St. John Vianney is the patron saint of all priests.

Fr. Michael Roach, Chair of the Church History Department of Mount Saint Mary’s Seminary, Emmitsburg, Maryland, indicated, “For over 200 years bishops in the United States have been writing pastoral letters to their people. They have covered dozens of topics. Not only does this current pastoral letter of the Juneau Diocese address a most crucial topic, it breaks new ground in American Catholic History in that it will be signed and sent, not only by the bishop, but by every one of the priests.”

While the Diocese of Juneau is the smallest diocese in the United States in population and has only nine active priests, its geographical area is about the same size as Florida. Fr. Patrick Travers, pastor of St. Paul the Apostle Church in Juneau, Alaska noted, “I think I can speak on behalf of all of our priests in expressing the hope that this pastoral letter will reassure the people of our Diocese of our commitment to their service.” The content of the pastoral letter focuses on the hope to restore trust and confidence of Catholics toward the Church through the recommitment of the priests to sanctity, contrition and commitment. Bishop Burns began the pastoral letter by saying, “I thought it would be best to write this pastoral letter with my brother priests so that through a strong, holy, dedicated presbyterate we can work together to strengthen the Church.”

The pastoral letter is being sent to all the parishioners of the Diocese of Juneau. It can also be found on the Diocesan website: www.dioceseofjuneau.org For more information please contact Ms. Robbie Izzard at the Diocese of Juneau: 907-586-2227 x25.