

REMARKS OF ARCHBISHOP JOHN F. DONOGHUE

PRESS CONFERENCE

DECEMBER 9, 2004 - 1:30 P.M.



My Dear Friends in Christ,

Today I am very honored to announce that the Holy Father has named Bishop Wilton D. Gregory of Belleville, Illinois as the Sixth Archbishop and the Seventh Bishop of the Archdiocese of Atlanta. On this historic day the Archdiocese of Atlanta is blessed to have a bishop who is respected as a leader by all of the bishops of the United States as its new shepherd.

The Holy Father has accepted my resignation in accordance with Canon Law, which requires that a bishop submit his resignation when he reaches the age of 75. Last Tuesday, a year and four months after my 75th birthday, I learned that the Holy Father has asked Bishop Wilton Gregory to assume pastoral leadership of this archdiocese. Archbishop-elect Gregory will be installed as the Archbishop of Atlanta January 17, 2005 at 1:30 p.m. at the Georgia International Convention Center.

Bishop Gregory has served both as an auxiliary bishop in the Archdiocese of Chicago and as the bishop of Belleville, Illinois. From November 2001 until November 2004 Bishop Gregory served as the President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. He has been publicly credited for guiding the Catholic Church in the United States through the sexual abuse scandal during his tenure as president of the USCCB.

He is admired and respected by his brother bishops and priests for his expertise on liturgy, preaching, leadership, authenticity to the teachings of the faith and most significantly, his personal prayerfulness. Bishop Gregory is first and foremost a priest who leads through his living of the Catholic faith. The Archdiocese of Atlanta is fortunate to have a man with his gifts named to minister in this archdiocese.

It has been a pleasure and an honor to serve as Archbishop of Atlanta for the past 11 years. I have been very happy in this diocese and always grateful for the support and prayers of the laity, clergy and religious. A special thanks is extended to my brother priests, especially my Vicars General Msgr. R. Donald Kiernan and Msgr. Paul Reynolds. The last few years have proven to be turbulent times for many priests, but during this crisis I have been surrounded by a wonderful group of holy men committed to assisting me in my role as archbishop.

My dear friends, it is now my privilege to introduce you to Archbishop-elect Wilton D. Gregory. I ask you to join me in praying that his new ministry be richly blessed by the Lord who calls him from Illinois to minister to the faithful in the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

For additional information, contact Kathi Stearns, Vice Chancellor at 404-885-7445.