

Reflections

by the
Most Reverend Thomas J. Murphy



Initial Reflections

Where does one begin? The events of August 21st still provide a reservoir of memories and grace which prompt within in me a spirit of thanksgiving to God and to the priests, sisters and people of the Diocese of Great Falls. To begin listing all of those who were responsible for their help, energy, work and effort extended on behalf of the Ordination and Installation ceremonies would be impossible. Consequently, I hope and trust that the simple, but all encompassing, words of "Thank You" will suffice for the moment.

Immediately after the Ordination on August 21, I wanted to visit the priests, sisters and people of the Diocese. I began these visitations by going to Billings on August 24th where I had the opportunity to meet with the priests of the Billings deanery and later on to celebrate the Eucharist with them and the people of the area at St. Thomas Parish. On August 27th, I returned to Billings for the 25th anniversary celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish. It was a great afternoon! The Mass and the Fiesta later in the park was a gathering of people from all over the area. Congratulations to Fr. Tom Rush and the people of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Celebrations were not my only experience during my first week as Bishop. On Monday morning, I participated in the Funeral liturgy for Mrs. Hopkins at St. Ann's Cathedral. As a mother of a priest, Mrs. Hopkins shared a tremendous gift with the Church of Eastern Montana through her son, Fr. Richard Hopkins. May God now grant her peace and joy for all eternity in His presence.

Later Monday morning, I drove to Miles City for another meeting with the priests and people of a Deanery. Once again, this proved to be an experience of faith and friendship which was exhilarating. The Mass at Sacred Heart Church in Miles City was truly a celebration of hope.

Tuesday afternoon, after visiting the parish school at Miles City, the journey continued with the next destination being Wolf Point. Along the way, it was good to stop and visit at Terry, Glendive and Circle. On Wednesday, once again the meeting with the priests of the area followed by the Mass at Immaculate Conception Church was a joyous occasion. The drive back to Great Falls included stops at Glasgow, Big Sandy and Fort Benton.

Two gatherings of priests and people remain and I look forward to them very much in Havre and Great Falls. However, I already know that I am a fortunate person because of the people I have met. I have seen a number of Churches and schools and other buildings, but what is most important, I have seen Church existing in the lives of the priests, sisters and people of this diocese. How fortunate can one be!