

Bishop Peter J. Jugis ordained as fourth bishop of Charlotte
New shepherd calls on all to help 'make known the love of Christ'

by KEVIN E. MURRAY
editor

CHARLOTTE -- Speaking in both English and Spanish, Bishop Peter J. Jugis asked the faithful gathered for his ordination to help him carry on the church's mission of salvation.

"All of us, regardless of our particular vocation, are involved in this grand mission of salvation," he said.

An estimated 3,000 people crowded St. Matthew's church and gymnasium, where Bishop Jugis' spectacular two-hour ordination ceremony was shown via closed-circuit television.

Bishop Jugis, 46, a native of Charlotte, succeeds Bishop William G. Curlin, bishop emeritus, as shepherd of the 46-county Diocese of Charlotte, established in 1972.

The multicultural Mass, broadcast live on the Internet, featured West African drummers, Vietnamese children from St. Joseph Vietnamese Church dancing with candles in the aisles and music -- including songs in Spanish, Korean and Vietnamese -- that was representative of the diverse cultures of the diocese.

"We are a young church. We are a rapidly growing church, filled with joy and vitality and holiness and the love of Christ," said Bishop Jugis. "We come from many different ethnic backgrounds and together we form the body of Christ -- a living sacrifice of praise."

Approximately 400 people participated in the opening procession, including priests, deacons, seminarians, abbots and representatives from diocesan parishes, missions, organizations, institutions and schools. Also included were clerical representatives of the Lutheran, Episcopal, United Methodist and Baptist denominations in North Carolina.

"God has given us great blessings on this day of joy, and it is a sign of His people's love that we are gathered in such great numbers to witness the ordination of the Diocese of Charlotte's fourth bishop, and to welcome him into the midst of his flock," said Archbishop John F. Donoghue of Atlanta, the principal ordaining bishop.

Joining Archbishop Donoghue was Bishop William G. Curlin, bishop emeritus of Charlotte; Bishop F. Joseph Gossman of Raleigh; Bishop Robert J. Baker of Charleston; Bishop David B. Thompson, bishop emeritus of Charleston; Bishop J. Kevin Boland of Savannah; Bishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Knoxville; and Archbishop Gabriel Montalvo, apostolic nuncio to the United States.

Archbishop Donoghue called on the people of the diocese to love and support Bishop Jugis, to seek his guidance and to accept his teaching in his role as their shepherd.

"Father Peter Joseph Jugis has already shown the people of this diocese his dedication and love, and it is because the Lord recognizes his abilities, his gifts and his potential in the souls of the faithful that the church now calls him to be your bishop," he said.

Archbishop Donoghue called Bishop Jugis "a man for the times and for the place."

"Your heart, your soul, your roots are here in the hills and plains of North Carolina," said the archbishop. "You carry in the record of development of your vocation the blessing and encouragement of two of the finest servants of the Lord -- Bishop (Michael J.) Begley and Msgr. (John) McSweeney."

Msgr. McSweeney, then-vocations director for the diocese, proposed the idea of being a priest to Bishop Jugis in the late 1970s. Bishop Begley interviewed Bishop Jugis as a potential seminarian in 1979.

Continuing, Archbishop Donoghue said to Bishop Jugis, "You carry into the future the same blessing and encouragement of Bishop Curlin and myself, who have known your goodness and your devotion to the faithful of North Carolina."

"And ... you were ordained by the hand of our most beloved and remarkable pope, John Paul II," said Archbishop Donoghue. "But do not forget that it is Christ the Lord who has chosen you, and that when he chooses a bishop, he also chooses a martyr. And martyrs must be strong, for themselves and for the church they live and die to foster."

Flanking a kneeling Bishop Jugis, Msgr. McSweeney, now pastor of St. Matthew Church, and Msgr. Anthony Kovacic, a retired priest of the diocese, requested Archbishop Donoghue confer ordination on Bishop Jugis.

Archbishop Montalvo then read the apostolic letter of Pope John Paul II. The document authenticates the Holy Father's appointment of Bishop Jugis as spiritual leader of the diocese. Archbishop Donoghue questioned Bishop-designate Jugis in the presence of the gathered people on his resolve to uphold the faith and to discharge his duties as bishop. Bishop Jugis then lay prostrate as the Litany of the Saints was sung.

Next was the laying on of hands by the bishops on Bishop Jugis' head. The ancient gesture, expressing the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, has been used since apostolic times for transmitting the authority and offices in the Catholic Church.

Rev. Mr. Ben Wenning, diocesan coordinator of the permanent diaconate, and Rev. Mr. Louis Pais of St. Gabriel Church in Charlotte, then held the Book of the Gospels over Bishop Jugis' head, a gesture expressing the burden the bishop will assume of proclaiming the Gospel as a member of the college of bishops, as the ordaining bishops prayed the prayer of ordination.

Bishop Jugis' head was then anointed with sacred chrism, signifying the full share in the priesthood of Jesus he received through the laying on of hands and the prayer of ordination.

The Book of the Gospels was presented to Bishop Jugis as a symbol of a bishop's ministry of teaching and preaching. He also received his ring, miter and crosier, which are signs of the office of bishop. Bishop Jugis then took his seat in the cathedra, the bishop's chair, and received a round of applause from the bishops and congregation.

In remarks at the end of Mass, Bishop Jugis resolved "to pray without ceasing to Almighty God for the holy people."

"We all must know that the Lord's work cannot be done without prayer," he said. Bishop Jugis thanked Archbishop Montalvo for his presence at the Mass.

"Your excellency, you are the personal representative of our Holy Father, and through you we send him our affection and esteem on the occasion of his 25th anniversary as the vicar of Christ," said Bishop Jugis. "We promise our continued prayers for his ministry."

Bishop Jugis expressed his gratitude for the priests and deacons of the diocese. "We are to guide the holy people of God in the way of salvation, to shepherd souls into eternal life," he said. "What a glorious calling, the work of salvation."

Bishop Jugis also addressed the importance of the laity in salvation.

"The Second Vatican Council taught that sacred responsibility is given to the laity to grow in personal holiness day by day and to see to it that you make known the Gospel message of salvation to all people," he said, "and that you transform our modern culture with the spirit of the Gospel."

"All of this springs from prayer and from our celebration of the sacraments, especially from our communion with the Lord in the holy Eucharist," said Bishop Jugis. "The Holy Spirit will guide us in helping make known the love of Christ."