



DIOCESE OF WINONA
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP
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March 2, 2012

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I write this letter to you because, along with the Bishops of Minnesota and North and South Dakota, I am on my way to Rome for our ad limina Apostolorum visit from March 2 to March 11, 2012, which means to come and pray at the threshold of the tombs of the Apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul. Church law requires that every diocesan bishop make a pilgrimage to Rome and report on the spiritual, pastoral and temporal aspects of the diocese every five years. This trip to Rome is a pilgrimage, so that bishops can strengthen the bonds of unity and charity, that binds every diocese to the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, who is the Bishop of Rome and successor of St. Peter.

The pilgrimage has three principal purposes. First, as bishops, we pray at the tombs of the Apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul and then celebrate Mass, at which we reaffirm our apostolic office and the unbreakable bonds of communion with the Holy Father. Second, the bishops visit the Vatican offices of the Curia to discuss pastoral issues and receive guidance and advice. These meetings are very helpful, because these departments or Curia Offices assist the Holy Father in the governance of a worldwide Church of over a billion Catholics. Third, the bishops will have the privilege of having an audience with the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, to hear directly from him about concerns that he will share from his heart. Pope Benedict XVI is the successor of St. Peter and the head of the College of Bishops spread throughout the world.

The whole purpose of the pilgrimage is to reaffirm and strengthen our communion with the Pope and recommit ourselves to the unity of the Church and to all that the Church believes and teaches, because those truths come to us from Jesus Christ through the Apostles. It is essential that the Diocese of Winona be in communion with the Bishop of Rome, who is the successor of St. Peter, who with St. Paul was martyred for the faith. This is the same faith we celebrate and preach today.

I take all of you with me in my heart on this pilgrimage. I am deeply aware of the privilege given to me to be your bishop and a successor of the Apostles. Every day, you will be prayed for and remembered in every Eucharist celebrated in Rome. It will be a great honor for me to assure the Holy Father of your deep love and loyalty and your continuous prayers for him and the Church. I ask you to accompany me with your prayers and I look forward to sharing the graces of this pilgrimage with you when I return.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Rev. John M. Quinn
Bishop of Winona