

**Bishop Deeley's Opening Statement
After Being Named 12th Bishop of Portland**

**Day of Episcopal Announcement, December 18, 2013
Chancery Office in Portland**

Praised be Jesus Christ - Now and forever.

Thank you, Bishop Malone, for your warm introduction. I appreciate your kind words. Thank you as well to my brother priests and deacons, devoted religious, my brothers and sisters, I am grateful for your presence here this morning. Thank you as well to the members of the press who are with us. I am grateful that you will let people know of our news this morning. You have been kind enough to come and listen. I will try to be cooperative with you by answering your questions after my statement. Remember I am new, throw me some easy ones. Allow me, however, before we move too far along in these proceedings to offer my profound thanks to Bishop Malone. We are all most grateful for your leadership of this wonderful diocese, and for your continued administration of it even as you also became the bishop of another diocese in Buffalo. You have been most generous, and you have carried out an arduous task with great dedication. I am privileged to succeed Bishop Malone. He has left a strong legacy for me. I am grateful for his dedication and tireless commitment to the people of this diocese. Naturally he could not have done it without the superior leadership staff he assembled here in Portland. In just the few days I have been aware of my new appointment I have become very impressed with the quality of the staff. Msgr. Andrew Dubois and Sr. Rita-Mae Bissonnette have been very kind to me in these days. I look forward to continuing collaboration with them, and all of those who are involved in the diocese.

And, if I might, I take this opportunity also to offer a word of thanks to Cardinal Sean O'Malley, Archbishop of Boston, with whom I have worked closely these last 2 ½ years while I served as Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia in Boston. He has taught me much of what it means to be a faithful shepherd. I carry his example with me. I am grateful for his guidance and his support during the years we worked so closely together in Boston.

This morning, I intend to offer a brief statement to you. Today marks the beginning of a new relationship. Whenever I start anew, I remind myself that I am building on the efforts of others, and I can only move things forward if I find out where things are, and then learn where we might go. I often use the image of a moving train to describe this situation. This wonderful diocese has been serving the people of God for 160 years. It has been proclaiming God's love in Jesus Christ through all those

years, well-served by bishops, priests, religious and laity. It carries out this task in parishes, schools, social service agencies, hospitals and colleges. I am climbing on a moving train. It will be my task to move through the train observing, listening and sharing ideas with those who are doing the work of God in this beautiful state. Maine is called “Vacationland” and that indeed it is, blessed as it is by the incredible beauty of nature, from the ocean and the lakes to the mountains and the fields. I have shared some of that over the years, skiing in some of your resorts, enjoying gatherings along the beautiful coast. But Maine is also the place of home and work for the many who make it a beautiful place to come and take a vacation. I will need to be particularly attentive to their needs. My statement will be brief, then, because I come with no set plan or program. I come only as your new shepherd, and, as Pope Francis is fond of telling bishops, I will have to get to know the smell of the sheep before I can serve you as well as the Lord calls me to.

The announcement that brings us together this morning is a moment of great joy for me. It is still, however, somewhat overwhelming. When I missed a call from the Nuncio last week it seemed as though the secretary down there had called. That is what I read on the “missed calls” on my iPhone. Angela had called. I was thinking it was a routine call from Washington seeking information of some kind. Instead, when I called back it was, in fact, the Nuncio, Archbishop Viganò who wanted to talk to me. When we finally connected, he informed me that His Holiness, Pope Francis, intended to appoint me as the Bishop of Portland. Archbishop Viganò wanted to know if I would accept. I was more than a little overwhelmed by the request. But, it seems to me that when the Holy Father makes a request a priest or bishop is going to answer “yes”. And so I did. In fact, I told the Nuncio I didn’t need a day to think about the request. If the Holy Father is asking me to do this, it is God’s will for me, and I am ready. Now, after a few days of reflection and prayer, I am still confident in my response and deeply honored that the Holy Father has given me his trust by asking me to carry out this responsibility. I am grateful for his confidence in me.

He sends me on a most important assignment. I am keenly aware of why the Holy Father himself, on reaching the balcony on the evening he was elected earlier this year, first asked the people gathered and all of us watching around the world to pray for him. The responsibility he now gives me is great but we know that God is good. He gives us no task without giving us the grace to accomplish it. I ask for your prayers, then, that I might always be humble enough to know that it is God’s work I am called to do, and that, with you who will be collaborating with me in this work, we together, praying for one another, will always be mindful that we depend on the Lord in all things. In him do we find our strength. My first request of you, then, is that you pray for me, that I might be worthy of the responsibility that is given me, and that I might be able to unite us as God’s people doing the work of the Lord. There is

nowhere that we do that in a more important or grace-filled manner than when we celebrate Eucharist and, particularly, when we gather for Mass as a community on Sunday. It is there, gathered around the Word and the Altar, Jesus Christ in our midst, that we become Church and remind ourselves that it is God's work we do in all the ways in which we bring God's love to others. We are passing on what we have received, the love of God incarnate in Jesus Christ whose coming we eagerly await in these days of Advent.

One of the first things a newly named bishop has to do is choose an Episcopal motto. Last year, when I was named Auxiliary Bishop in Boston I did that. I chose a passage from Paul's letter to the Ephesians: "Veritatem facere in caritate," "Living the truth in love." Each bishop chooses his own motto. But, by a strange turn of fate, or grace, it appears that Bishop Malone and I both chose the same Latin text. He translates his motto a little different from mine; "Live the Truth in Love". We evidently were both touched by the same inspiration of the Holy Spirit. I only learned of his motto some time after my ordination. In any case, for me these words of Paul are the heart of our challenge in the Church today. In his recent Apostolic Exhortation, Pope Francis reminds us of our responsibility to be evangelizers, to bring the joy of the Gospel to others. Each of us is called to preach what we believe with our lives. In such a way we invite others to come and know the joy and hope we find in the message of truth which we call Jesus Christ. Pope Francis has a beautiful, human style of conveying his point. Nowhere is that more evident than when he speaks of being joyful proclaimers of the Good News: "...an evangelizer must never look like someone who has just come back from a funeral! Let us recover and deepen our enthusiasm, that "delightful and comforting joy of evangelizing, even when it is in tears that we must sow... And may the world of our time, which is searching, sometimes with anguish, sometimes with hope, be enabled to receive the good news not from evangelizers who are dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious, but from ministers of the Gospel whose lives glow with fervor, who have first received the joy of Christ" (Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*).

In the passage of the Epistle to the Ephesians from which I have taken my motto, Paul calls on the people of the early Church to grow into the Body of Christ, precisely by living the truth in love. Paul speaks of the many ways in which this is done by different people with differing tasks in the Church. Some are pastors or bishops, some are teachers, but all are called to be holy and committed to the work of evangelization, of proclaiming the Gospel, in the community of the Church with joy.

Though I only have had a few days to acquaint myself with the work of the diocese, I did get the opportunity to review the quinquennial report. This is the report submitted to Rome every five years to inform the Holy Father of the work of each

diocese. I was so happy to see in that report that some specific tasks close to my vision of the need of the Church are highlighted as goals for the Diocese of Portland: an increase of vocations to the priesthood and a strengthening of parishes as places where evangelization is an intentional value. We can only be a Eucharistic community if we can gather for Mass, and for that we need priests. And one way in which we encourage young men to consider the priesthood is to strengthen parish communities where the love of God is celebrated in worship and in charity. That work of charity to which we dedicate ourselves as the community of the Church, the care of the poor, the sick, and the needy in our midst, is the most important way in which we show forth our gratitude for the love that God, in his own abundant mercy, showers on us. I look forward, then, to being your shepherd as we work together to strengthen the work of the Church by making the name of the Lord Jesus known in our words and in our deeds of charity throughout this great state of Maine. Pray for me, as I do you, that we may be what the Lord calls us to be, the community of the Church showing forth the love that God has shown us in his Son, Jesus. We will thus become the Church in Maine which truly is “living the truth in love”. God bless you all and thank you again for being here.